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YINGER'S SUBSTRUCTURE OF RELIGION
A CHINESE REPLICATION

by
Peter Chao

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

April

1982

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VITA

The author, Peter Chao was born in Yangku, Shantung, China, May 17, 1929.

He graduated from St. Augustine High School, Yenchow, Shantung, China in 1948.

He received his M.A. in theology from the Università Urbaniana, Rome, in 1955 and his PH.D. in theology from the Università Gregoriana, Rome, in 1957.

From 1959 to 1960 he studied social sciences at Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Mainz, Germany and from 1961 to 1965 sociology at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster, Germany.

He taught theology at Lewis College, Lockport, Illinois, from 1966 to 1969.

He received his M.A. in German literature from the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle in 1971 and his M.A. in sociology at Loyola University of Chicago in 1979.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Purpose of the Study

The realization of the need for conceptually separating "religion" as such from any particular form of religion in the scientific study of religion is by no means new. Matthes (1962:39) pointed out that Herbert of Cheshire, a seventeenth century British philosopher of religion, already laid down the creed of the later science of comparative religions that the notion of religion, as a generic concept, should not be determined by the concrete form or content of any specific religion. Within the sociological tradition, Durkheim (1965:37-63) painstakingly exposed the inadequacy of all the definitions of religion that were put forward under the influence of a particular type of religion for the scientific study of religion and insisted on the formulation of a definition that is capable of covering all known religions. Nevertheless, most propositions developed from the empirical studies of Judeo-Christian religions in the past few decades have been stated and treated as if they held for all religions or religion per se. This was made especially evident in the recent controversy on the issue of secularization in

which the secularization of the institutionalized religion was taken or mistaken by many sociologists as the secularization of religion as such (Glasner, 1976; Chao, 1979). Luckmann (1967:17-27) observed that this tendency to generalize propositions or findings derived from the studies of a particular religion to religion tout court was basically due to a "scientific ideology" commonly held among the sociologists of religion that church and religion are identical.

The intent of the preceding paragraph is not to criticize, but to describe the condition of the sociology of religion in the recent past. The aforementioned unconscious and unwitting parochialism in the sociology of religion was but a reflection of the general intellectual milieu of the social scientific community of the time. Commenting on the American social scientific climate between the 1930s and 1950s, Armer and Grimshaw (1973:xii) made the following remark:

Even though the predominant concerns of American sociology in this period were largely within one societal and cultural context, the discipline consistently retained its traditional definition of its underlying objective: the discovery of uniformities in social behavior and social structures. The tacit presumption prevailed until well after World War II, however, that most sociological research could be pursued effectively without necessarily going beyond American society.

The so-called area researches necessary for intelligence purposes, the international exchanges of scholars,

and the emergence of a cohort of young social scientists who had served overseas during World War II all had contributed to the change in this parochial situation (for a detailed account, see Armer and Grimshaw, 1973:xi-xvi; Warwick and Osherson, 1973:3-6). The present generation of sociologists have become "more aware of the ethnocentric biases and unquestioned generalizations built into their concepts and theories (Warwick and Osherson (1973:6) and searched for, with renewed vigor, "explanations that will stand the test of varying socio-cultural conditions" (Warwick and Osherson, 1973:6). Sociologists of religion have also increasingly realized that the sociology of religion has been narrowed to a sociology of church, and more and more sociologists have begun to broaden their definition of religion, shifting their attention to the study of what Luckmann (1967) called "invisible religions". Yet, effort to broaden the definition of religion has not been accompanied by corresponding empirical research. Most sociologists, despite their enlarged definition of religion, continued, quite understandably, to limit their empirical work to institutionalized religions; and even those engaged exclusively in the study of invisible religions have proven themselves unable to step out of the confines of a particular manifestation of religion, albeit an invisible one. This restriction of researches to particular forms of reli-

gion, institutionalized or otherwise, along with the diverse conceptualizations and methodologies adopted in these studies have made it impossible for them to yield significant and universally applicable theories. Indeed, a somewhat greater accumulation of non-comparable cases of even invisible religions have left us, at least in terms of pursuing a general theory of religion, not much better off than we were before.

Among the contemporary sociologists, Yinger (1969, 1970, 1977) is undoubtedly the first who has attempted, not only to broaden the definition of religion, but also to design research instruments to go beneath the surface of external manifestations of religion and empirically to grapple with the fundamental elements intrinsic to all religions, traditional or newly emergent alike, in order to "develop generalizations about the relationship of religion and society that are capable of being applied across cultural lines and across time periods" (1970:32).

The present study is a modest effort to participate in Yinger's venture to search for these cross-culturally applicable generalizations by replicating his study with a Chinese sample.

The Need for Replication

In sociology, as in other empirical sciences, the value of replication as a basic tool to achieve generaliza-

tions has long been recognized, but unfortunately, in practice it has received too little attention from sociologists (Mack, 1951; Rose, 1954:256-272; Fletcher, 1970; Loether and McTavish, 1974:153). La Sorte (1972:218) observes that, "though many pay lip services to the importance of replication, one rarely finds extended discussion of it in textbooks on research methods." Wilson et al. (1973) have even documented the existence of an anti-replication bias in some leading sociological journals, arguing that this bias against replication combined with the bias in favor of reporting statistically "significant" findings in the periodicals can result in "a substantial body of undetected Type I errors in the sociological literature." "Perhaps this explains," Loether and McTavish (1974:154) believe, "why many so-called principles of sociology have little predictive value and little basis in fact."

"Replication research," as La Sorte (1972:225) assured, "is not dull, repetitive hackwork for those with more original mind, it requires considerable imagination and skill, and is capable of predicting new directions in methods, data, and theory." Nevertheless, the tendency to look upon a replication as mere hackwork and the attraction of the magical phrase, "an original research," have indeed made sociologists and graduate students extremely reluctant to do replication studies (Mack, 1951).

However little appeal replication may have to sociologists, its importance can never be overestimated, especially in a young discipline like sociology. Loether and McTavish (1974:154) pointed out that "much more attention needs to be given to replication if sociologists are to develop theoretical models which are useful predictive and explanatory instruments. It is only when we do replicate studies that we begin to realize how tenuous many of our research findings are." To remedy the neglect of replication and its concomitant damaging consequences for sociology as a science, Mack (1951) suggested three decades ago that "an encouraging beginning step would be allowing, or even encouraging, graduate students to do replication of significant research."

The present study is what Straus (1968:565) called "comparative replication." He explained this phrase as follows:

By comparative replication is meant repeating a previously published study in some other society to determine the effects of the different socio-cultural milieu on the phenomena being studied. However, this replication cannot just be in any society. Rather it must be done in a society chosen because it represents a pattern of social organization likely to influence the phenomena under study in some theoretical way.

Thus, comparative replication is but one category of the more encompassing cross-cultural research method (Manaster and Havighurst, 1972:188). Speaking of the sociology of religion, Swatos (1977) argued that returning to the com-

parative method is "the special vocation of the sociology of religion." "To have long-run value," he said (1977: 107), "the sociology of religion must be cross-cultural and transhistorical in its orientation," and "if the sociologist of religion is to be more than a technician for a particular religious establishment, then it is to the rough ground of comparative sociology that we must return" (1977:112).

Reasons for Replicating Yinger's Study

It has been repeatedly emphasized by those urging replication studies that not all studies that have been done are worth being replicated (see, for instance, Mack, 1951:94; La Sorte, 1972:225). Selltiz et al. (1976:64) pointed out that "the usual criterion is that the problem is recognized as important and the findings have such potential significance either for theory or for practice, or both, that it seems worth checking them for added confirmation." The fact that Yinger's work is the first effort in the sociological literature to use survey method to explore the concept and nature of religion as such is itself a sufficient challenge for replication and scrutiny. In addition, Yinger (1969, 1970, 1977) assumed that nearly everyone has a religion just as nearly everyone speaks a language. Just as modern linguists main-

tain that there is a common structure underlying all human languages, Yinger believes there is also a common substructure--though it may vary in pattern--underneath the surface of all religions, and this substructure is empirically accessible. The significance of his work lies in this: if his approach to the study of religion is scientifically proven useful and his hypothesis cross-culturally confirmed, not only will the conventional methods in the empirical research of religion be shown to be "narrow and trivial" (Luckmann, 1967:18), but also the whole tradition of viewing religion in terms of the secularization thesis so prevalent throughout the history of the study of religion in all academic disciplines will be proven "theoretically naive" indeed (McCready and Greeley, 1973:3).

As will be demonstrated below, Yinger's approach to the study of religion has increasingly attracted attention among the sociologists of religion and has been hailed by some as holding great promise for the future study of religion (Rojek, 1973; Clayton and Gladden, 1974; Machalek and Martin, 1976). Thus, a cross-cultural replication of his work is not only justified, it is indeed necessary.

Reasons for Choosing the Chinese Sample

Straus (1968:565), as cited above, stressed that a comparative replication should not be conducted in just any society, but in a society where the phenomenon under

scrutiny is likely to be affected. The Chinese sample was selected for replicating Yinger's study because of the alleged ambiguous yet unique attitude of the Chinese in the matter of religion, which could be an expression of the particular nature of the Chinese religious substructure, if such a substructure indeed exists.

The Chinese people have been characterized by some scholars as religious, but by others as indifferent to religion, and even as unreligious. Thus, Bodde (1946: 531) contended that, even though there have been periods of intense religious activities in Chinese history, and the Chinese masses have not been free from superstitious beliefs, "nevertheless, religion as such has been taken more lightly in China than in most other countries."¹ More sweepingly, Hu Shih (1928, vol.I:91) asserted that "China is a country without religion and the Chinese are a people who are not bound by religious superstitions. This is the conclusion arrived at by a number of scholars during recent years." In sharp contrast, Hsu (1970:232) remarked that "even Henry Dore's monumental ten-volume collection entitled Researches into Chinese Superstitions failed to exhaust the list of divinities. No one knows how many gods there are in China." Commenting on the underestimation of religion in the Chinese society, Yang (1961:6) said

¹Quoted from a footnote in which Bodde sought to clarify his assessment of the position of religion in the Chinese society.

that:

There was not one corner in the vast land of China where one did not find temples, shrines, altars, and other places of worship. The temples and shrines dotting the entire landscape were a visible indication of the strong and pervasive influence of religion in Chinese society, for they stood as symbols of a social reality.

Characterizing the intellectuals in China, Hu Shih (1934:78) stated that "the educated people in China are indifferent to religion." Chan (1969:235) maintained, however, that "modern intellectuals . . . do not believe in spirits as they are understood by the ignorant masses. But there is no doubt that they believe in a power above physical existence."

About the native religion in Taiwan, where the Chinese data for this study were collected, Thompson (1973:332) observed "that this religion plays a vital role in the life of the Taiwanese people is evident even to the casual traveler, who is impressed, especially in the countryside, by the fact that temples, humble or imposing, are everywhere." Toward the popular religions, Chinese intellectuals have throughout the history expressed attitudes ranging from amused condescension to outright contempt. On the intellectuals's attitude toward the religion of the masses in Taiwan, Ch'iu (1970:276-277) noted that "almost every intellectual including the Confucian elite and Western educated intellectuals would regard the beliefs and

practices of Taiwanese folk religions as 'magical and superstitious'."

Troubled by the array of conflicting views on the Chinese attitude toward religion, Young (1979:154) suggested that "it is high time that we throw out the word religion altogether" in the discussion of the Chinese religions.

In face of these divergent scholarly opinions, one is led to wonder if they were simply products of the diverse definitions of "religion," or there may well be indeed something distinctive in the religious character of the Chinese that has evoked such variegated and even contradictory interpretations. If the latter is true, one would expect that this something distinctive must somehow reflect, or be reflected by, the putative substructure of religion.

Indeed, by far the most decisive reason in selecting the Chinese sample to replicate Yinger's study was what Thompson (1973:1) called "the Chineseness" underlying all Chinese religions. To explain why he titled his book Chinese Religion instead of Chinese Religions--since there is evidently more than one religion in China--Thompson (1973:1) pointed out that the purpose of his book was indeed to make apparent the rich variety of religious expression in China; and yet, his deliberate use of the word

religion in the singular was intended to draw attention to an even more pervasive theme in his exposition: "The Chineseness of all these varieties of religious expressions." He claimed that "the character of religious expression in China is above all a manifestation of the Chinese culture."

Thompson was not alone in detecting something unique in the Chinese religious experiences. Amazed by the characterization that the Chinese are unreligious, Ching (1978) proposed, instead of dismissing the matter by appealing to varying definitions of religion, "to discuss the question of the distinctive 'religious sense' of the Chinese" (1978: 169). She argued that the Chinese are not unreligious, nor are they religious as the Western are; "they are," to quote Yinger (1969:92), "simply differently religious."

Freedman (1979) concurred with Thompson that a distinctive Chinese religion exists and saw in the whole spectrum of Chinese religions, peasant as well as elite religions, the display of a single underlying religion taking many guises.

Behind the superficial variety [of religion] there is order of some sort . . . of a kind that should allow us (if we take the trouble) to trace ruling principles of ideas across a vast field of apparently heterogeneous beliefs, and ruling principles of form and organization in an equally enormous terrain of varied action and association. Ideas and forms need not be uniform to be common; they may be reflections, perhaps misshapen reflections, or idiomatic translations of one another, as in their transmission back and forth between social strata, between sect and "church," between "church" and "church," between text and living

language, between the cultivated and the popular. Their Chineseness lies in a basic stock upon which complex social and intellectual life works and elaborates variety (Freedman, 1979:352-353).

In these words, one can almost detect a structural linguist speaking a religious language.

In one form or another, these sinologists contend that all Chinese religions are but different idiomatic translations of a single and unique religion: the Chinese religion. If a substructure of religion common to all human religions truly exists, the Chinese religion must be a unique transformation of that universal substructure; thus, it was believed that the selection of the Chinese sample to replicate Yinger's study would have a unique and significant contribution to either confirmation or rejection of his hypothesis.

The Plan of the Study

In the following chapters the material will be presented as follows:

Chapter II thoroughly discusses Yinger's two empirical studies related to this replication and their appraisals and retests. Chapter III describes the research method employed in this study. Chapter IV compares the background characteristics of the different national student samples used in this study. Chapter V compares the problems the respondents perceived as fundamental and per-

manent for mankind and presents tentative interpretations for the differences in their perceptions of these problems. Chapter VI compares the responses of the respondents to the statements on the questions of meaning, suffering, injustice, religion, and politics. Chapter VII compares the respondents' perceptions and experiences of the extent of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. Chapter VIII compares the effects of the background variables on the respondents' responses to the statements on the issues of meaning, suffering, injustice, religion, and politics. Chapter IX presents a summary of the findings, discusses Yinger's approach to the study of religion, and points out its implications of the future study of religion.

CHAPTER II

YINGER'S STUDIES AND RELATED LITERATURE

Methodologically, Yinger, in his empirical studies of religion, drew largely on modern linguistics. Broadly speaking, one may say that, as structural linguistics has developed from early surface structural description to modern underlying structural analysis (Eastman, 1978; Pearson, 1977:71-186), so has Yinger's empirical study of religion as such moved from an illustration of surface structural description in his A Structural Examination of Religion (1969)--which was, with some modification, reprinted in his book The Scientific Study of Religion (1970)--to the identification of the substructure of religion in his A Comparative Study of the Substructures of Religion (1977). Since these studies are pathbreaking attempts in the scientific study of religion, it seems important to review them all in more detail.

A Structural Examination of Religion and its Appraisals

The Structural Examination of Religion

In his seminal work, Yinger (1969) was chiefly preoccupied with justifying a broad definition for "religion"

and for proposing an empirical approach to the study of religion analogous to that used by structural linguists.

The crucial issue in the controversy of the definition of religion is whether naturalistic and atheistic belief systems should be included in the definition. Yinger argued that, in order for religion to retain or recover its influence in contemporary world, to make the distinction between religious change and religious decline possible, and to take into account "invisible" and emergent forms of religion, they should be included in any general definition. To answer why he does not reserve the label "religion" for a rather narrow definition and instead select another term for the broad concept--somewhat a la mode Glock and Stark (1965:11-12), who treated religion as a subclass of value orientation, defining it as a value orientation with a supernatural referent--Yinger (1969:98-99) said that:

In part, I am willing to accept this as a satisfactory decision. It then follows, however, that we must shift our attention to the sociology of "ultimate belief systems" (or whatever term we decide to use to label the "class" rather than the "species"), because in my judgement, most of the important problems faced by students of human behavior related to belief systems appear at that level. By studying only religions of the species level, we miss the analytically similar processes at the class level.

My preference, however, is to use the word religion to refer to the class, not the species. This preference is partly valuative and strategic; I think such a usage may help to smooth mankind's way from declin-

ing "ultimate belief systems" that have become irrelevant or uncommunicative to the contemporary ear, toward those that can more successfully maintain our concern for the permanent problems of the human situation. My preference is also based on a scholarly judgement: We are less likely to overlook the invisible, the emergent systems of ultimate beliefs and actions, and therefore less likely to overlook their analytic similarities with older, more visible systems if we place them all within a major category labelled by a word already possessing a wide range of connotations--namely religion.

Inspired by Philosopher Langer (1957:287) and anthropologist Geertz (1966:6), Yinger conceives religion basically as man's response to his ultimate concerns, and proposes the following "operational definition" of religion:

Where one finds awareness of and interest in the continuing, recurrent, "permanent" problems of human existence--the human condition itself, as contrasted with specific problems; where one finds rites and shared beliefs relevant to that awareness which define the strategy of an ultimate victory; and where one has groups organized to heighten that awareness and to teach and maintain those rites and beliefs--there you have religion (*italics deleted*) (1969:91).

Yinger (1969:91) made a strong point about the triple aspect of his definition: the individual aspect (awareness and interest), the cultural aspect (shared rites and beliefs), and the social aspect (groups). Each aspect is essential. "Where one is lacking, religion is not present in the full meaning of the term" (1969:91). Thus, he refused elsewhere (1970:10) to acknowledge purely individual belief systems as "religions."

It should be pointed out that this definition presupposes that inherent in the human condition are always prob-

blems which humans cannot solve empirically but thus demand a joint effort to cope with symbolically. Seeking symbolic solution of otherwise unsolvable problems is seen as the constitutive part of man's inborn ability, just as is the persistence of ultimate problems assumed to be the fundamental fact of his worldly existence. The types of problems deemed to be empirically unsolvable may change from time to time and from person to person, but the persistence of such problems is an enduring reality in human life. Thus, religion by necessity changes in form continuously but never declines as such (1969:89). "In this sense," Yinger elsewhere stated (1970:8), "religion can be thought of as a kind of residual means of response and adjustment."

The Measurement of Religion

The presumption of the persistence of empirically unsolvable problems in human existence and man's innate ability to deal with them symbolically led him logically to the assumption that everyone--nearly everyone--is religious, just as nearly everyone speaks a language; and thus to the suggestion that, "rather than asking a person if he is religious, we ask how he is religious" (1969:90). It came to nobody's surprise when he proposed a research approach to religion similar to the one used by structural linguists:

In structural linguistics, the various elements or dimensions of language have been identified--phonology, semantics, grammar, etc. One determines whether or not any given system of sounds is a language by the presence or absence of these constituent elements . . . Let us ask our respondents to "speak their religion" to us, uninstructed by our own preconceptions (Yinger, 1969:91).

We record what we hear, and then look for patterns of belief and action among our respondents, properly classifying them, of course, by sex, race, region, class, educational level, society, and other sociological characteristics (Yinger, 1969:93).

If we were engaged in cross-cultural studies, he said:

The responses . . . could be compared with those given by persons of different age, class, cultural training, and religious tradition, much as linguists might compare the phonemes of a series of languages to see how much they overlapped and the ways in which they differed (Yinger, 1969:95).

To illustrate the problem of measurement, Yinger designed a seven-item preliminary questionnaire (1969:92-93) which contains four open-ended questions intended to stimulate the respondents to speak out what they consider to be "man's ultimate concerns" and their beliefs, group formations, and activities that have derived from these concerns; and seven Likert-type statements, which he called "non-doctrinal religious statements," constructed to tap the respondents' attitudes toward the issues of suffering, injustice, violence, and religious effort to solve them. Analyzing the responses of 1325 American college students randomly selected from ten Middle Western liberal-arts colleges, Yinger (1969:94-95) said,

The students were strongly interested in the problem, they responded to the questions seriously; they left few of the items blank. Every respondent indicated at least one permanent question. Only one-half, however, stated that they were members of or participated in a group that was primarily concerned with that question (and only 15% indicated a church).

As a whole, 69 percent of the respondents were concerned with the problems of suffering, injustice, and violence, and were convinced that man can cope with these problems by faith and action despite their persistence. These respondents Yinger characterized as "religious" (Yinger, 1969:96).

When the respondents were divided into three groupings: I. church grouping, II. other grouping, and III. no grouping, he found that "religious responses" predominate in all three groups, but there is an exact progression from Group III (64 percent) to Group II (72 percent) to Group I (80 Percent). He also discovered the presence of many invisible religious beliefs.

The Appraisals

Yinger's seminal work stimulated interest among several sociologists of religion. Some sociologists greeted Yinger's approach as a refreshing and promising way of studying religion. Thus, Rojek (1973:176) said that Yinger's approach to religion

may lead to the discovery of a totally new and vital

dimension of religious forms. Instead of viewing religion in perpetual stage of decline, or invoking the "routinization of charisma" as the invariant process through which the pristine fervor of the original religious movement is dissipated, perhaps religion should be seen as charting the ultimate concerns of a people. Approached in this way, the once sacrosanct measures of frequency of church attendance could give way to vitally new dimensions of religion, heretofore seen only in a secular context.

Clayton and Gladden (1974:142) also hailed Yinger's approach as a new and a challenging direction in the study of a religion:

Most of the attempts to measure dimensions of religiosity have treated the latter as if it were Religion with a capital R (i.e., a recognizable historical Religion with its leaders, devotees, rituals, etc.) instead of a religion with a lower-case r, namely, (as Yinger has so provocatively suggested) people's efforts to grapple meaningfully with what they define as the Ultimate. Yinger's approach broadens considerably the types of behavior considered religious and sensitizes us away from trying to measure "religiosity" in the abstract by the dubious procedure of simply measuring those aspects of orthodox Christianity implicitly presumed to be shared by all branches of Christianity. If religiosity is thus seen as a pervasive world view, religion with a lower-case r, it obviously cannot accurately be assessed by scales so closely bound up to a particular faith. We need, at the very least, different scales to measure other ideological commitments. We need, further, to move, as Yinger suggested so compellingly, toward means of measuring the "religious" expression of people who may not acknowledge the relevance of the Religion that is dominant in their society.

As indicated above, Yinger considered religion essentially as a group effort to deal with ultimate concerns. To explore the possibility that there may be coping strategies independent of any group context, Machalek and Martin

(1976:15) modified Yinger's definition given above by removing from it the elements of shared rites, beliefs, and social group and redefined religion as follows:

Religion represents (1) an actor's acknowledgement of the existence of one or more ultimate concerns in his or her life, and (2) the ideas and actions, when present, which the actor employs in attempting to cope with these concerns (1976:314).

In their analysis of 112 interview schedules, obtained from 201 randomly selected Louisiana households, Machalek and Martin found that 29.6 percent were independent of any group, formal or informal.

On the potential significance of a definition of religion, based on the concept of ultimate concerns, Machalek and Martin (1976:320) commented:

One potential important outcome of such reconceptualization of the religious factor may be in the greater predictive power available by characterizing respondents according to reported ultimate concerns rather than "religious preference" or "affiliation." That is, variations among categories of ultimate concerns such as reported here may prove better predictors of political behavior, mental illness, and so on than classic differentiations of religiosity such as Protestant, Catholic, and Jew.

Other sociologists were more interested in Yinger's measuring device. Using data from a sample of 217 undergraduate students attending Western Kentucky University, Nelsen et al. (1976) assessed the reliability and validity of Yinger's seven Likert-type, non-doctrinal religious statements taken as a single index and found that there was little internal reliability, and that the items fell

into two factors: (1) acceptance of belief and order, and (2) value of suffering, thus measuring two different dimensions. They recommended a refinement of the instrument, such as by adding more items to it and further testing its reliability and validity upon different regional student samples.

Responding to Nelsen et al.'s suggestion, Roof et al. (1977) collected data from 113 undergraduate sociology students at the University of Massachusetts. Their results substantiated Nelsen's findings: there was a lack of inter-item reliability in Yinger's seven-item statements, and the items represented this time, three separate dimensions: value of religious efforts, value of difficult experience, and belief in order and pattern.

Interest in defining religion in terms of man's response to ultimate problems also stimulated other sociologists to develop other techniques to probe the respondents' ultimate concerns. Thus, to tap the American people's ultimate value system, McCready and Greeley (1976) designed an interview schedule including a series of vignettes intended to explore the respondents' reactions to some critical situations in life, such as, a terminal illness, a sudden death of a parent, and so on. From the responses by a national sample of 1,467, they found, among others, that sex, age, race, region, religious background,

traditional religious behavior, social class, and social behavior all make a difference in shaping the pattern of American people's ultimate values, and these values in turn also have a moderate effect on the American people's social and ethical attitudes.

Comparative Study of the Substructures
of Religion and Related Literature

Previous Proposal to Study the Deep Structure of Religion

Before discussing Yinger's study on the substructures of religion, it seems instructive to mention one piece of related literature preceding Yinger's study. It is difficult to establish precisely whether it was due to the diffusion of scientific insight or pure coincidence that a few years after the publication of Yinger's Structural Examination of Religion, in 1969, in which he suggested a structural linguistic approach to the study of religion, Anthony and Robbins, (1975) on the occasion of their discussion of Bellah's symbolic realism, proposed the structural linguistic approach in the study of religion, adopting the concepts of surface and deep structures of modern linguistics. It should be noted that although Anthony and Robbins were the first to suggest the use of the notions of "surface" and "deep structures" in the sociology of religion, they certainly

were not the first to attempt to apply them to sociology in general. Before them, Grimshaw (1972:290) had already asserted, that

I am increasingly convinced that: (1) there are deep structures and surface structures of social interaction just as there are for language, (2) there quite possibly are universal relations in social interaction (or social structure) which hold in all societies but undergoing different social transformational rules, (3) there may very well be grammars of social interaction for societies and a grammar of social interaction in a quite precise analog to the linguist's rules of a grammar and rules of grammar.

He even attempted to establish what he regarded as universal and system-specific rules parallel in linguistic, social, and sociolinguistic systems, which cannot concern us here (see 1972:302-304).

In Bellah's symbolic realism (1970)--a theoretical perspective that maintains that "religious symbolization" and "religious experience" are inherent in the structure of human experience (1970:251)--Anthony and Robbins (1975) saw Bellah formulating a structural theory of religion similar, in some respects, to Chomsky's theory of language. Chomsky (1965) argued that, built into human beings, there is a deep, strictly grammatical structure, common to all languages which through interaction with other non-grammatical forces; such as, psychological, social, or economic, has yielded the diverse surface structures of all human languages. Similarly, Anthony and his associate believed that there must also be, inherent in human beings, a

universal structural network common to all religions which through interplay with non-religious factors has produced the apparently manifold religious forms. To identify this deep structure empirically, they suggested that one should proceed from examination of the surface structures of known religions. According to them, "religion" should be defined, (in the strict sense) as symbolic systems capable of expressing a coherent arrangement of the value-orientations of a total culture (Anthony and Robbins, 1975:406). Just as glossolalia and symbolic logic are disregarded in linguistic structural theory as para-language, so also, they assert, should symbolic systems which are incapable of providing a value framework for a total society be simply treated as "para-religions." Thus, they suggest that one should start with non-problematic religions, such as Christianity or Hinduism, which have already demonstrated the capacity for furnishing a coherent value-orientation for a whole society. Once the alleged deep structure of religion is found, one has to seek to specify the "ways in which religious universals interact with sociology, economics, and other social scientific systems to produce religious and cultural variations," Anthony and Robbins, (1975:413). So far, this research proposal has received some mixed reactions (see Johnson, 1977; Kelly, 1978), and it remains just a proposal.

A Comparative Study of the Substructure of Religion

Although, in his comparative study of the substructures of religion (1977), Yinger did not use the term "deep structure," the choice of the concept of the substructure of religion was undoubtedly inspired by it, considering especially his advocacy for adopting the structural linguistic method in the study of religion (1969, 1970). He believed that, "since superempirical systems of belief and rite are found nearly everywhere, if not universally, it seems reasonable to suppose that they are related to experiences that are humanwide, resting upon some common substructure" (1977:67), and "years of research, study and reflection have led me," he said, "to the belief that religion rests upon the persistent experience of suffering, injustice, and meaninglessness. These experiences are widely recognized as the roots of religion" (1977:68).

Compared with his early study (1969), Yinger, in his cross-cultural study (1977) both modified his definition of religion and refined his instrument. He conceived religion in terms of the substructure of religion he assumed to exist, and defined it as "the final word and the final action by which an individual or a society seeks to deal with the threat of suffering, meaningless-

ness, and injustice" (1977:68). This definition was then operationally extended to a set of beliefs and practices by which a group

- 1) designates its deepest problems of meaning, suffering, and injustice;
- 2) specifies its most fundamental ways of trying to reduce those problems (these shade off into and are complementary with secular ways):
- 3) and seeks to deal with the fact that, in spite of all, meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice continue (1977:69).

Beside the specification of suffering, meaninglessness, and injustice, outstanding in the short definition is the fact that Yinger, contrary to what he had done in his early work (1969, 1970), no longer insisted that the social aspect be an indispensable component of the definition of religion, thus granting also to private experience full status of "religion." Even though he still considered religion as a group activity in the extended definition, he no longer emphasized it; rather he pointed out that what is definitive in this definition is that religion, in the final analysis, rests on a "supernatural faith," a faith, he said, that "setting aside the 'facts' [suffering, meaninglessness, and injustice], it affirms, in one form or another, a remedy for the human condition that is 'beyond tragedy'" (1977:69).

With respect to the instrument, he extended the number of the Likert-type statements from seven to twenty and also added six background variables to the

questionnaire in order to explore the influence of social factors on the respondents' perceptions of, as well as their attitudes toward the permanent problems of mankind. Thus, Yinger has moved from a purely descriptive effort (1969, 1970) to an explanatory venture in his search for the general theory of religion.

From the responses from a non-random sample of 751 college and university students in Japan, Korea, Thailand, New Zealand, and Australia,¹ Yinger found that

- 1) only eight percent failed to refer to themes of meaning or meaninglessness, suffering and its reduction, or justice-injustice when asked to indicate the basic and permanent question of mankind. Many respondents mentioned two or all three of these themes, with 60% noting questions of meaning, 54% problems of suffering, and 38% issues of injustice in their answers;
- 2) nearly three-fourths of the responses to the non-doctrinal statements were in the "religious" direction, i.e., they see the problems of suffering, injustice, and meaninglessness as permanent aspects of the human condition and yet, paradoxically, as somehow subject to final control by our beliefs and actions, and they believe that behind the difficulties and the disorder there is another kind of reality that supersedes and redefines experiences;
- 3) the median scores on the [seven-point] perception scale indicate that the respondents perceive less meaninglessness (3.70) than suffering (5.75) and injustice (5.69); and the median scores on the [seven-point] experience scale indicate likewise that the respondents experience less meaninglessness

¹For some tabulations, an additional 124 respondents from 11 different countries that were working at an American research center in the U.S.A. as well as a group of 151 students of an American college who answered the earlier shorter version of the questionnaire (1969) were added.

(2.44) than suffering (3.04) and injustice (2.79). Thus, despite the perceptions and experiences of high levels of suffering and injustice, the prevailing belief and experience is that life is meaningful for most people;

- 4) citizenship followed by religious identity and educational level does exercise, though weakly, influence on how respondents view the problems of suffering, injustice, and meaninglessness; but sex, social class as indicated by father's occupation, and major subject make no significant difference in how they look at the non-doctrinal religious issues.

A Partial Test of Yinger's Substructure of Religion

Since exactly which elements constitute the substructure of religion represents the very essence of Yinger's study, it was only expected that whether meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice are indeed the basic components of the substructure of religion would arouse suspicion among sociologists of religion. Thus, Wright and D'Antonio (1980) collected 155 responses to Yinger's open-ended question, "What do you consider the one most fundamental or important issue for the human race; that is, what do you see as the basic and permanent question for mankind, the question of which all others are only parts?" (furnished by predominantly Catholic students living in the campus dormitories at the University of Connecticut). After classifying them into six categories: (1) meaninglessness, injustice, and suffering; (2) learning to love, understand, and care for others; (3) peaceful coexistence; (4) survival, overpopulation, and food; (5) concern for personal happiness; and (6) other, they found that, compared with 92 percent

in Yinger's sample (1977:72), only 20 percent of their respondents referred to meaninglessness, injustice, or suffering. The largest single response category was "learning to love, understand, and care for others," with 35.5 percent. This discrepancy, however, was found to be the result of a different coding scheme.

To test whether "love" is part of the substructure of religion, the same researchers replaced Yinger's original question with the following one:

Religion means many things to many people. Regardless of your own religious background (or absence of it), how would you interpret or translate the actual meaning of religion? In other words, if it could be encapsulated, transformed into a belief or attitude, and acted out in everyday life, what would it be, how would you describe it?

Results from 205 introductory sociology students at the same university indicated that "love" was the second largest response category (21.5 percent) behind "belief in God, Christ, or Supreme Being" (34.6 percent). The problem of meaning constituted only 6 percent, and the issues of suffering and injustice were not mentioned at all. But the responses to the forced-choice questions, "Which of the following is the most important ingredient in religion: 'reducing suffering; achieving justice; loving; understanding or caring; establishing peace; finding meaning; none of these?'" showed that 70 percent of the students said loving, 6 percent referred to meaning, 5 percent to suffer-

ing, and only 1 percent to achieving justice. The authors (1980:297) then concluded that the "overlapping meanings of 'love' uncovered in this study, combined with the relatively weak responses to the themes of meaninglessness, injustice, and suffering indicate a lack of empirical support for a substructure of religion."

Wright and D'Antonio's study has been reviewed rather extensively because its findings were interpreted by the authors as a rejection of Yinger's substructure thesis. Yet, such a conclusion seems a bit hasty and sweeping. Classifying a large amount of unstructured responses into a small number of categories depends, in a sense, always on the judgment of the researcher. Like definition, classification poses a perennial problem to social scientists. As with definition, only a long-run scientific usefulness can decide the advantage of one classificatory scheme over the other. To criticize another researcher's definition or classification in terms of one's own definition or classification only reveals one's own definitional or classificatory preference or even ideology. It seems too early to dismiss Yinger's classification procedure, findings, and by implication his definition of religion--the authors did take issue with the structural approach to religion because it "does not readily accommodate the vertical or 'numinal-transcendent' dimension (Otto, 1923, 1958)

so firmly entrenched in Western religion" (1980:297)-- based on a study of a small group of college students on a single university campus of predominantly one religious persuasion. In religion, as in language and psychology, what belongs to the substructure or deep structure of religion is by definition not necessarily recognized by the adherents in their consciousness. In consciousness, religion--specific features can always--and usually do--override religion-universals. This is especially true when the respondents are asked to define religion, as in Wright and D'Antonio's study, for themselves. In such a case, respondents tend to define religion in terms of their own religious affiliation. If well-trained specialists of religion in the West have so easily and for so long identified religion with church, one should not be surprised when American introductory sociology students define and think of basic features of religion in terms of Christianity. This may in part explain why love and belief in God or Christ were so pronounced in their responses, and the questions of meaning, injustice, and suffering showed up so weakly. Whether love and belief in Christ, God, or a supernatural Being should be regarded as religion-specifier or religion-universal depends, of course, on how "religion" is defined. Thus, we come full



circle back to the problem of definition of religion,
where the whole controversy and confusion in modern
sociology started.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

Instrument

The instrument used in this study (see Appendix A) is identical to the extended questionnaire used by Yinger in cross-cultural study (1977), except that it has been translated into Chinese (see Appendix B); all but the open-ended questions have been precoded; items irrelevant to this study, such as citizenship and ethnicity, have been removed; and the demographic questions have been placed last. The original English questionnaire was first translated by three independent translators; two professional translators in Taiwan and one Chinese philosophy professor in the U.S.A. The final wording of the items was decided by the writer after extensive discussions, singly or in groups, with some twenty Chinese students from Taiwan residing in the metropolitan Chicago area. Before being put in print in Taiwan, the questionnaire was again critically read by several professors and students, and no change was deemed necessary. Pretest among subjects was regarded as no longer needed, since the questionnaire did not deal with difficult concepts, nor did the study deal with poorly educated respondents. The

precoding followed closely Yinger's 1973 codebook used in his 1977 study; only minor modifications have been made to suit the Chinese situation.

The questionnaire consists of four major sections. Section one has four open-ended questions designed to determine the problems that the respondents perceive as fundamental and permanent (#1); the beliefs, groups, and group activities that have been developed to cope with these problems (#2, #4); and the behaviors that are influenced by them (#3). A person is considered as "religious" if he sees suffering, injustice, and meaninglessness singly or in combination as the enduring problems of mankind and yet is convinced that man is able to deal with them by his beliefs and actions (1977:72-78). Section two contains 20 Likert-type statements to tap (1) the extent of the respondents' interest in and interpretation of the meaning of life (#10, #22, #7, #18); (2) their assessment of the extent of suffering in the world and the significance of man's effort to reduce it (#8, #17, #19, #11); (4) their appraisal of the significance of suffering, injustice, death, and violence in human experience and of man's attempt to deal with these problems by religious means (#5, #6, #12, #14, #23, #24); and finally their attitude toward man's effort to reduce suffering and injustice through political actions (#16,

#21). Yinger (1977:76-77) considered a person as non-doctrinally religious if he disagreed with statements #10, #12 and agreed with #5, #14, #18. Previously, Yinger (1969:93-94) regarded a person as religious if, in addition to the aforementioned items, he disagreed with item 23 and agreed with item 24, two items concerning historical religions. Section three has six seven-point scales designed to determine the respondents' perceptions of the degree of injustice, suffering, and meaninglessness in the world (#25, #26, #27), as well as their experience of these problems in their own lives (#28, #29, #30). A person who scored significantly lower on the meaninglessness scales than on the suffering and injustice scales was considered religious, because despite the high levels of injustice and suffering, he still perceives and experiences life as meaningful (Yinger, 1977:77). Finally, section four has eight questions designed to secure information about respondents' sex (#31), educational level (#32), academic major (#33), father's occupation (#34), parental religious affiliation (#35, #36), personal religious affiliation (#37), and personal religious need (#38) in order to explore the importance of some factors that may influence the respondents' attitudes toward the issues of suffering, injustice, and meaninglessness.

Sample and Data Collection

The sample of this study is a systematic sample drawn from the 7,216 day-program undergraduate students attending Fu-Jen University in Taiwan, 1979-1980; 3,630 of this student body were females and 3,586 males. A list of names of all the day-program undergraduate students was arranged based on the Student Address Catalogues for the separate colleges of the University obtained from the registrar's office, and every seventh student was selected with the first being selected randomly. This yielded 1,030 subjects, approximately 15 percent of the day-program undergraduate student body of the University.

Although Fu-Jen University is financially and administratively a Catholic university, its students are, like the students of any other university or college in Taiwan, assigned to the university by the National Ministry of Education on the basis of their scores on the National College Examination conducted islandwide by the Joint Examination Board of Taiwan and the admission standard and quota set by individual departments of the university, completely irrespective of their religious affiliations. Students' personal preferences for a given university or college are taken into account only when the requirements mentioned above have first been

met.

Because of this particular university admission policy in Taiwan, one is tempted to regard the sample of this study as representative of all undergraduate students in Taiwan, at least of undergraduate students of those universities and colleges with an academic standard similar to that of Fu-Jen University. In no sense, however, does this study claim that its results can be indiscriminately generalized to the students of other universities, let alone to the college students of the whole island of Taiwan; the sample is a random sample of Fu-Jen University, and the findings can, with safety, be applied only to the students of that University.

During the last month of the first semester of the 1979-1980 academic year, with the approval of the University president and the consent of the department chairmen, an anonymous self-administered questionnaire, along with a coding sheet, was distributed by the departmental assistants within a period of two weeks. It had been previously decided that if for any reason a respondent could not be reached at all, the student next to him on the list would be selected and given the questionnaire. Altogether 1009 questionnaires were returned. To secure additional returns, a follow-up letter, along with a post-paid, self-addressed envelope, was mailed to the home

addresses of each of the 21 students who had failed to respond, since it was toward the end of the semester, and it was feared that some students might be difficult to reach. This brought ten additional returns. Thus, all in all, 1,019 cases were obtained. Of these, 1,005 were usable for analysis, representing a response rate as high as 97.5 percent. Similarly high response rates by college students as well as the public-at-large in Taiwan have been reported by O'Hara (1965, 1972) Grichting (1971), Appleton (1970a, 1970b, 1970c), and Ross (1979). It seems that, when asked about serious questions, the Chinese in Taiwan, students and the general public alike, are very willing to cooperate.

In order to check the validity of the responses, the returns were compared with the Student Address Catalogues with regard to sex, educational level, and academic major, and they were found identical. Because the registrar's office was unwilling to give out information about students' religion as well as their father's occupation and religious affiliation, it was impossible to compare the sample and population on these variables. As to the reliability of responses to the statements, as will be seen, the patterns or responses to the positively phrased items as compared with those to the negatively phrased

items on the same issues in the Chinese sample are not appreciably different from those in Yinger's samples. Special care was given to coding and classifying responses to the open-ended questions, since they are crucial to the outcome of the research. They were done first by the writer, strictly following Yinger's classification scheme given in his codebook (1973), and then were checked by two Chinese college students for validity; suggestions were assessed by the writer; and they were followed, if necessary, before the responses were punched onto the IBM cards.

Data Analysis

As professor Yinger graciously made his data available to the writer after the Chinese data had been collected, the writer deemed it fruitful to break up Yinger's data (which he had pooled together) in his 1977 study into four national groups: Japanese, Korean, Thai, and New Zealand-Australian, and then to compare their respective statistics with those of the Chinese sample so that both similarities and differences could be made more visible. The New Zealand and Australian data have been combined because of their historical, linguistic, cultural, and religious similarities. In addition, the Australian data consists of too few (52) cases to form

an adequate independent sample for some statistical comparisons such as regression analysis. It should also be pointed out that out of all the data furnished by professor Yinger, instead of 751 cases, as indicated in his 1977 study (1977:69-70), only 746 appropriate cases (that is, students who were at the time of data collection studying at their home colleges or universities) have been retrieved. Since the impact of the missing cases is trivial, no further search for them was thought necessary. For this study, the number of cases in the Japanese sample is 138, in the Korean 144, in the Thai 154, and in the New Zealand-Australian 310.

Independent and Dependent Variables

In this study, as in Yinger's 1977 study, indeed as in most sociological studies of religion, sex, father's occupation (as an indicator of social class), religious affiliation, educational level, and academic major field are treated as independent variables; and the respondents' perceptions of permanent problems of mankind and their attitudes toward the questions of meaning of life, suffering, and injustice are viewed as dependent variables. A few remarks about some of the independent variables seem necessary.

Father's Occupation. Following Yinger's codebook (1973), father's occupations are aggregated into nine

major categories: professional, government or military official, official in a large firm, owner or manager of a small firm, white collar worker, skilled worker or craftsman, armed force (non-officer) or unspecified occupation, farmer or fisherman, and semi-skilled or unskilled worker. For regression analysis, these occupational categories are not treated as nominal variables, but as ordinal variables, ranked according to the International Standard Prestige Scores developed by Treiman (1977:235-260). The scores for these gross occupational categories are obtained, as suggested by Treiman (1977:197-199), by averaging the International Standard Prestige Score assigned to each occupation, or to each occupational sub-category.

Although Duncan's Socio-economic Index has widely been used by researchers, but since its development was based on the American situation, the International Standard Scores seems, as Treiman (1977) has repeatedly argued, to be preferable for cross-national studies.

Religious Affiliation. Judging from Yinger's codebook and the Chinese data, it is safe to say that most respondents conceived religion in terms of the narrow and conventional sense of the term. In every sample, religious affiliations have been grouped into four gross categories: Buddhist, Christian, other, and no religion. "No religion"

indicates, in this study, that the respondents do not belong to any conventional religious institution, not that they do not have a religion as Yinger defines it.

It is well acknowledged that crude classification such as combining Protestants and Catholics can, at times, mask some significant attitudinal variations among them. On the other hand, given the strong syncretism in religious thinking among the Japanese, Korean, and Chinese, even a crude classification such as adopted here may not be able to differentiate people adequately on many religious attitudes and thus artificially divides those with actually similar attitudes into separate groups. Considering the complexity of religious phenomena in a cross-national study, the classification problem is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to solve; and one classification is other no better than another. Given the generality of Yinger's assumption that the questions of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice underlie all religious belief systems, it may be argued that a crude religious classification scheme may have a better chance to discriminate respondents on these universal issues than a finer one, and thus should be preferable.

Academic Major. Classifications of the major fields in the studies of college students' religion vary greatly (for a detailed discussion see Feldman and Newcomb, 1969:365-

372). In this study, the major fields have, following Hoge (1969:217) and two undergraduate school offices which were consulted, been uniformly combined into four categories: humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and business and other. Since the colleges or universities from which the samples were drawn do not necessarily offer the same major courses, and since Yinger's samples are not random samples and thus do not necessarily represent all the major courses offered by the respective colleges or universities, it is expected that each of the four gross academic categories does not comprise the same number or the same kind of major courses across the samples. This may in part account for the cross-cultural differences in the attitudes toward meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice among the students enrolled in different major fields. Of course, the same equivalence problem holds also, mutatis mutandis, for the broad categories of other background variables such as religious affiliation and father's occupation.

Statistical Analysis

Well aware of the variety of equivalence and a host of other related problems in cross-cultural researches (Przeworski and Teune, 1970; Monaster, 1972; Armer and Grimshaw, 1973; Warwick and Osherson, 1973), the statistical analysis of this study is to compare some of the

basic results obtained from the Chinese and Yinger's samples that are related to the topic of the substructure of religion. These comparisons are of purely descriptive interest, and the validity of the findings is strictly limited to these particular samples alone. Thus, no significance test has been applied, and no generalization beyond these particular student groups has been made. Yinger (1977:70-71) pointed out that his samples were by no means representative samples, not even of the college or university students from which the data were collected, and a significance test of statistics of non-representative samples has, by definition, little meaning. About the statistical significance test in general social survey researches, Schuessler (1971:39) said the following:

In sampling studies of social and economic characteristics, little or nothing may be known about the population distribution; moreover, crude scaling techniques may yield measures of unknown reliability and validity. Under these circumstances, it may be sensible to forego the use of significance test and to be content with a mere description of the data. It may be mentioned that the application of significance test to survey data is a matter of debate among specialists in sociological methodology, and these issues remained unsolved at the moment.

The analysis of data in this study consists basically of description of respondents' responses to the different questions and statements concerning the assumed substructures of religion, i.e., meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, and exploration of the effects of the background

factors (sex, father's occupation, religious affiliation, educational level, and academic major) on respondents' attitudes towards these issues. The description of the responses to the questions and statements related to the themes of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice includes the following comparisons: (1) frequency distribution of the respondents' perceived permanent problems of mankind, (2) frequency distribution of their responses to the 20 Likert-type statements, and (3) their median scores on their perceptions as well as experiences of the extent of meaninglessness of life, injustice, and suffering in the world.

Responses to the questions regarding the respondents' reported beliefs about the perceived permanent problems of mankind and the effects of these problems on their behavior (question 2 and 3 in the questionnaire) will not be analyzed in this study. Yinger did not analyze them in either of his two studies. In his 1969 study, after examining respondents' reported perceptions of permanent problems of mankind by group, he (1969:96) stated that "the data are not good enough to deserve further analysis." Presumably the responses were too variegated to be manageable and meaningfully analyzed, at least not for a journal article. In this case, there could be conceivably as many beliefs and effects as there

were respondents. More important to the decision not to analyze them in this study is that responses to these questions are not really directly related to the issue of the substructures of religion, which was Yinger's central interest in his 1977 study and which the present study is intended to replicate.

The assessment of the strength of the effects of the background variables is restricted to the 20 Likert-type statements, and the statistical technique used is multiple regression analysis. The 20 items are, following Yinger (1977:73-76), thematically divided into five sets of items to form five subscales measuring the respondents' attitudes toward the themes of meaninglessness, suffering, injustice, religion, and politics respectively. Item scores within each set of items are added up to yield five composite scores for each respondent, and these are treated as dependent variables in the regression analysis.

The meaning of the five subscales is as follows:

Meaning Scale (Item 1, 2, 3, 4) A respondent with a low score on this scale is very interested in discussion of the question of the meaning of life, often wonders what life is all about, believes that there is an order and pattern to existence, and agrees that the basic meaning of life is beyond human understanding.

Suffering Scale (Item 5, 6, 7, 8) A respondent with a low

score disagrees that in recent generations there has been a significant reduction in the amount of suffering in the world; rather he believes that in recent generations suffering has increased in the world. He agrees that the types of suffering have changed and may continue to change, but the extent of suffering is unlikely to be reduced. Nevertheless, he considers suffering reduction as a critically important task for mankind.

Injustice Scale (Item 9, 10, 11, 12) A respondent with a low score on this scale does not think that in recent generations there has been a significant reduction in the amount of injustice in the world; rather he feels that in recent generations injustice in the world has increased. He realizes that the types of injustice in the world have changed and may keep on changing, but the extent of injustice is unlikely to diminish. Yet, he believes that injustice reduction is a critically important task for mankind.

Religion Scale (Item 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18) A respondent who scores low on this scale agrees that difficult and destructive experiences in life often increase one's understanding and power of endurance, and disagrees that in the long-run undeserving persons often seem to win the most advantages. In view of the continuous conflict and violence in the world, he cannot see how men can

learn to live together with mutual respect and peace, but is convinced that suffering, injustice, and even death can be given significance by man's beliefs. He disagrees that religious efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems are a waste of time and resources, rather he considers them as valuable, even though he may not agree with many a religious belief and practice.

Politics Scale (Item 19,20) A respondent with a low score on this scale disagrees that political means to deal with man's most difficult problems are a waste of time and resources, nor does he agree that in the long-run, man can really reduce suffering and injustice through wise political actions.

CHAPTER IV

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

As indicated above, to explore possible social influences on the respondents' attitudes toward the issues of meaning, suffering, and injustice, Yinger selected gender, father's occupation, religious affiliation, educational level, and academic major as contributing factors. Description of the assumed contributing variables is important in every social research, but it is particularly necessary in comparative studies since the magnitude of all correlations depends not only on the size of the samples, but also on the proportion of the cases in each category of the respective independent variables. The background characteristics of the the five student samples are presented in Table 4.1.

Gender

Glancing over Table 4.1, what strikes the eye most is the uneven distribution in the samples. Thus, it becomes immediately noticeable that the percentage difference between male and female students varies considerably from sample to sample, ranging from 52 percent for the Japanese and 12 percent for the New Zealand-Australian samples in favor of the females to 16 percent for the Korean, 6 percent for the Thai,

TABLE 4.1 Background Characteristics of the Respondents
(in percent)

| Background Variable | Nationality ^a | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | | | |
| Male | 23.9 | 56.3 | 53.2 | 43.9 | 51.7 |
| Female | 76.1 | 43.8 | 46.8 | 56.1 | 48.3 |
| Number of cases | 138 | 144 | 154 | 305 | 1002 |
| No response | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 |
| <u>Father's Occupation</u> | | | | | |
| Professional | 15.7 | 4.0 | 8.9 | 15.1 | 13.0 |
| Government or military high official | 1.5 | 1.6 | 8.1 | 2.6 | 5.6 |
| Official in large firm | 2.2 | 4.0 | ---- | 1.6 | 4.7 |
| Owner or manager of small firm | 53.7 | 24.8 | 51.9 | 26.6 | 20.9 |
| White-collar worker | 20.9 | 40.0 | 21.5 | 17.4 | 25.1 |
| Skilled worker or craftsman | 2.2 | 1.6 | 0.7 | 9.9 | 7.2 |
| Armed force (non-officer) or unspecified occupation | 1.5 | 2.4 | 4.4 | 3.0 | 9.5 |
| Farmer or fisherman | 0.7 | 17.6 | 3.7 | 14.8 | 8.7 |
| Semiskilled or unskilled worker | 1.5 | 4.0 | 0.7 | 8.9 | 5.1 |
| Number of cases | 135 | 125 | 135 | 304 | 959 |
| No response | 3 | 19 | 19 | 6 | 46 |

TABLE 4.1 (cont.)

| Background Variable | Nationality | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| <u>Religion</u> | | | | | |
| Buddhist | 10.9 | 6.5 | 90.6 | 2.0 | 4.4 |
| Christian | 26.4 | 37.1 | 3.4 | 63.3 | 12.7 |
| Other | 3.9 | 1.6 | 4.0 | 3.3 | 4.4 |
| None | 58.9 | 54.8 | 2.0 | 31.3 | 78.5 |
| Number of cases | 138 | 144 | 154 | 305 | 1002 |
| No response | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 |
| <u>Educational Level</u> | | | | | |
| Freshman | 50.0 | 95.8 | 29.1 | 63.3 | 27.1 |
| Sophomore | 43.5 | 2.8 | 50.3 | 26.0 | 26.0 |
| Junior | 6.5 | ---- | 15.9 | 5.2 | 23.1 |
| Senior | ---- | 1.4 | 4.5 | 5.5 | 23.8 |
| Number of cases | 137 | 144 | 151 | 308 | 1004 |
| No response | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| <u>Academic Major</u> | | | | | |
| Humanities | 37.9 | 57.3 | 19.9 | 46.8 | 29.0 |
| Social sciences | 57.9 | ---- | 27.8 | 32.3 | 12.7 |
| Natural sciences | ---- | 0.7 | 31.1 | 18.5 | 23.4 |
| Business, law, or Medicine | 4.2 | 42.0 | 21.2 | 2.4 | 35.0 |
| Number of cases | 95 | 143 | 151 | 297 | 1005 |
| No response | 43 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 0 |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

and only 3 percent for the Chinese samples in favor of the males. Such marked variations in students' sex ratio could, of course, be the result of the different sex ratios of the student bodies from which the samples were drawn, but given the admitted nonrepresentativeness of Yinger's samples, they reflect more likely the differences in sampling procedures.

To support this contention, let us just take one example. In Japan, junior college students are mostly women, whereas the universities are filled predominantly with men. Whitaker et al. (1974:173) reported that in Japan "over 80 percent of all junior college students in the 1970-1971 academic year (around the time when the data used for this study were collected) were women." One might reason that the Japanese sample with 76.1 percent females was probably drawn from a junior college, and the striking sex ratio could very well mirror the actual sex ratio of the student body of that junior college. Yet, looking at the distribution of the Japanese sample by educational level, one sees right away that the juniors--some Japanese junior colleges have a three-year program instead of just two (Whitaker et al., 1974:156)--with 6.5 percent are very much under-represented. It is really difficult to imagine that such a small proportion of juniors can reflect the actual proportion of the juniors in the whole student body, even granted the pos-

sibility that by the junior year, some students may prefer to leave college for jobs.

Father's Occupation

Inspection of father's occupations also shows that in most occupational categories there are obvious cross-sample variations. Thus, for instance, the proportion of the students coming from professional backgrounds ranges from 16 to 4 percent, and the proportion of those having fathers as farmers or fishermen varies from 18 to not even one percent. Even in small business and white-collar categories from which a great number of students in all samples come, the variations are outstanding. While more than half of the Japanese and Thai students stemmed from small business families, only one-fifth to one-fourth of the respondents from other national groups came from such occupational homes. Similarly, the percentage of the students with white-collar parentage fluctuates from four-fifths to one-fourth.

Based on these data alone, it is impossible to determine whether these differences are primarily the results of the differences in cross-cultural occupational structure, in parental desire or financial ability to send their children to higher education among various occupational groups in these countries, in the particular

occupational background combination of the student bodies from which the samples were selected, or in sampling procedures.

It should be pointed out that the relatively large percentage of the Chinese students, nearly 10 percent, in the "armed force and unspecified occupation" category is largely due to the precoding procedure adopted in the Chinese questionnaire. Although the precoding had followed very closely the postcoded occupational categories that were shown in Yinger's codebook (1973), the Chinese students apparently did not classify their fathers' occupations the way Yinger would have classified them. This, of course, may have somewhat deflated the proportion of the students from other categories compared with the postcoded categories in other samples.

Religious Affiliation

With respect to religious affiliation of the students, the cross-sample variations are also remarkable. Given the religious character of their respective countries, the proportion of the Thai, who reported to be Buddhist or to have no religion, and the proportion of the New Zealand-Australians, who said they were Christians or belonged to no religion, should cause no surprise. Whether it already starts in high school or begins in college, defection from tradi-

tional religions in college is a common phenomenon in Western societies. That 31 percent of the New Zealand-Australian students stated that they had no religious affiliation is comparable with the findings among many American college students (see, for instance, Ferman, 1960; Educational Reviewer, 1972; Pilkington et al., 1976; Wuthnow and Mellinger, 1978). The tiny percentage of the students reporting no religion and the overwhelmingly large proportion reporting to be Buddhist in the Thai sample is due to the fact that the Thai are a religiously homogeneous population. As Judaism is for the Israelis, Buddhism is for the Thai a national religion; it is the keystone of their culture and central to their thoughts and concepts. Education may have changed their approach to religion, but it has not eradicated it. As Blanchard (1958:116-117) pointed out, the impact of the Western philosophical and scientific thoughts on the Thai Buddhism has not meant the disappearance or collapse of Buddhism, but the creation of a strong socially and altruistically oriented neo-Buddhism among the urban intelligentsia. Supporting this observation, Barry (1967:29) found that, among 1,190 Thai students living in the United States in the years 1964-1965, 94 percent reported as belonging to Buddhism, and only 1.9 percent said they had no religion.

What may surprise many, however, is the relatively small percentage of Buddhists, the comparably large proportion of Christians, and the very large number of students reporting no religion at all in the Japanese, Korean, and Chinese samples. As noted above, defection from traditional religions in college is a widespread phenomenon in Christian countries, but it is even more so in Japan, Korea, and China, where religion is considered a strictly personal affair, and syncretism is the normal attitude in religious matters. As a rule, religion is not taught at schools, nor are the parents as interested in their children's religion as are the parents in Christian societies. Probably this is the reason why traditional religions in these countries, unlike Christianity, have not developed doctrinal systems for the instruction of the believers even in the very basics of their faith. Religion, as practiced by the masses, is, in consequence, intellectually naive and often viewed by the educated with indifference and amusement, if not with contempt and ridicule. Under such circumstances, students entering college are intellectually and psychologically much less equipped to withstand the secular challenges of higher education than their counterparts in the West.

This situation appears particularly pronounced in China. Hsu (1971:53-58) observed that the Chinese

approach to temples and gods is not unlike the American approach to a supermarket and a laissez-faire attitude in capitalistic economies. Thus, since religion is completely a question of "preference" or of "taste," the Chinese have no desire to proselytize to their religions. Yang (1961:25) noted that "even priests in some country temples were unable to reveal the identity of the religion to which they belonged."

Commenting on the religious climate in Taiwan, Chaffee et al. (1969:144) made the following remark:

Secularism, combined with Confucian ethics, is the dominant tone within the educational structure and at the higher levels of government. In distinction to the strong religiosity of the older generation, particularly among the farmers and the uneducated, a spirit of agnosticism is prevalent among youth and among the influential educated minority.

Ch'iu (1970:276-281) pointed out that folk religions are under continuous attack and ridicule both in the newspapers and among the intellectual and other influential elites; they are seen as superstition, waste of money and energy, hindrance to scientific progress, marks of lack of sophistication, etc.. The Chinese traditional laissez-faire attitude, coupled with these general attitudes among the elites toward religion of the masses, certainly help explain the relatively large proportion of the Chinese college students who reported no religious affiliation at all.

One can shed some light on the secularizing influence of higher education on religion in Japan, Korea, and China by comparing the respondents' reported religious affiliations with those of their fathers as presented in Table 4.2. However, it should be emphasized at the outset that non-Christian children in Japan, Korea, and China are, as a rule, not formally initiated into their parents' religion as it is in most cases in the West. Children may never consider the question of religion until they become adults. Hence, the terms "defection" or "apostasy" so often used to describe the difference between the subjects' and their fathers' religions in Western literature are not adequate in the non-Christian context. What Table 4.2 indicates is no more than an empirical hint of the influence of college education on the traditional religiosity.

Examination of Table 4.2 reveals that with regard to Buddhists, the students in the Japanese, Korean, and Chinese samples deviate considerably from their fathers' religions; only 22 to 9 percent of the students reported adhering to their fathers' religions, with the Chinese deviating the most. Even among the Christians, the proportion of the Chinese, still retaining their father's faith is not only far smaller than the proportion of the Japanese, it is even smaller than that of the New Zealand-

TABLE 4.2 Relationships between the Respondents' Religion
and their Father's Religion
(in percent)

| Respondent's Religion | Father's Religion | | | | Number of cases |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | Buddhist | Christian | Other | None | |
| <u>Japanese</u> | | | | | |
| Buddhist | <u>21.8</u> | 00.0 | 7.7 | 2.3 | 14 |
| Christian | <u>27.3</u> | <u>75.0</u> | 30.8 | 11.6 | 33 |
| Other | 3.6 | <u>00.0</u> | <u>7.7</u> | 4.7 | 5 |
| None | 47.3 | 25.0 | <u>53.8</u> | <u>81.4</u> | 71 |
| Number of cases | 55 | 12 | 13 | 43 | 123 |
| <u>Korean</u> | | | | | |
| Buddhist | <u>14.3</u> | 00.0 | 18.2 | 4.1 | 8 |
| Christian | <u>23.8</u> | <u>100.0</u> | 27.3 | 30.1 | 46 |
| Other | 00.0 | <u>00.0</u> | <u>9.1</u> | 00.0 | 1 |
| None | 61.9 | 00.0 | <u>45.4</u> | <u>65.8</u> | 66 |
| Number of cases | 21 | 16 | 11 | 73 | 121 |
| <u>Thai</u> | | | | | |
| Buddhist | <u>95.7</u> | 00.0 | 16.7 | 100.0 | 135 |
| Christian | <u>1.4</u> | <u>100.0</u> | 00.0 | 00.0 | 5 |
| Other | 1.4 | <u>00.0</u> | <u>66.7</u> | 00.0 | 6 |
| None | 1.4 | 00.0 | <u>16.7</u> | <u>00.0</u> | 3 |
| Number of cases | 139 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 149 |
| <u>New Zealand- Australian</u> | | | | | |
| Buddhist | <u>100.0</u> | 2.7 | 00.0 | 00.0 | 6 |
| Christian | <u>00.0</u> | <u>65.7</u> | 00.0 | 46.2 | 190 |
| Other | 00.0 | <u>3.2</u> | <u>25.0</u> | 00.0 | 10 |
| None | 00.0 | 29.3 | <u>75.0</u> | <u>53.8</u> | 92 |
| Number of cases | 1 | 280 | 4 | 13 | 298 |

TABLE 4.2 (cont.)

| Respondent's Religion | Father's Religion | | | | Number of cases |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------|------|--------------------|
| | Buddhist | Christian | Other | None | |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| <u>Chinese</u> | | | | | |
| Buddhist | 9.0 | 00.0 | 1.4 | 00.0 | 43 |
| Christian | 6.5 | 59.0 | 1.8 | 10.0 | 119 |
| Other | 2.5 | 0.8 | 10.7 | 1.7 | 44 |
| None | 82.0 | 40.0 | 86.1 | 87.9 | 750 |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| Number of cases | 434 | 125 | 281 | 116 | 956 |

Australians. This is surprising, since one would expect fewer defection incidences in the so-called mission countries; but this reveals well the Chinese attitude in religious matters.

Table 4.2 also reveals that, probably thanks to the appeal of the logically well developed doctrinal and ethical system of the Christian religion and its attendant strong recalcitrance to the secular influence of higher education, Christian students in the Japanese and Korean samples, compared with their fathers, have roughly doubled their numbers; whereas the Chinese Christians have suffered only a slight loss in membership. Thus, the strikingly high deviation rate among the Buddhist students on the one hand, and the considerable overall gain or only slight loss in membership among the Christians on the other, seem to help to account, at least partially, for the relatively small proportion of Buddhists and the relatively large percentage of Christians in the Japanese, Korean, and Chinese samples shown in Table 4.1.

Educational Level

Looking at the educational level of the students, what stands out immediately is that the Japanese, Korean, Thai, and New Zealand-Australian samples were mostly drawn from the freshman and sophomore years. Students from

these two classes constituted 94 percent of the Japanese, 99 percent of the Korean, 79 percent of the Thai, and 89 percent of the New Zealand-Australian samples. Among the Korean students, freshmen alone represented 96 percent of the whole sample. In contrast, the Chinese students were rather evenly distributed among all educational levels. These discrepancies are perhaps a reflection of the divergent sampling procedures, though other possibilities can never be excluded.

Academic Major Field

Considerable cross-sample variations can also be seen in the distribution of students among the different academic major fields. While the Thai students were pretty well spread among all four major subjects, 96 percent of the Japanese sample were concentrated in the humanities and social sciences, 99 percent of the Korean sample was from humanities and business, law, or medicine, and 98 percent of the New Zealand-Australian sample came from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. There were no students from the natural sciences in the Japanese sample, nor were any from the social sciences among the Koreans. Like the Thai sample, the Chinese sample included significant numbers of students from each major field: 29 percent

from the humanities, 13 percent from the social sciences, 23 percent from the natural sciences, and 35 percent from business and law. There are no medicine departments in Fu-Jen University. The somewhat underrepresentation of social science students and the overrepresentation of students from business and law reflect the exact proportion of the students from these two major fields in the whole university student body.

Summary

Given the remarkable variations in the frequency distribution of the respondents in the different categories of the background variables, it should be emphatically pointed out that many of the cross-cultural differences or similarities in the students' attitudes toward the issues related to meaning, suffering, and injustice--the assumed substructure of religion--should be viewed with extreme caution, since they could be attributable to the discrepancies in these distributions rather than national differences.

CHAPTER V

PERCEIVED PERMANENT PROBLEMS FOR MANKIND

Permanent Problems Identified

Religion, as defined by Yinger, is a superempirical means instinctively devised by man when confronted by crucial problems which he perceives he is unable to solve empirically. The forms of the problems that are seen as empirically unsolvable may change from individual to individual and from society to society, but as such, these problems are postulated to be inherent in the human condition itself. Accordingly, the forms of religion may change in response to the changing forms of the empirically unsolvable problems, but religion as such is assumed to be a fundamental fact of human life. For Yinger, therefore, the question is not whether there are problems which man cannot deal with by empirical efforts, but what are these problems that have given and continue to give rise to so many types of religion. Yinger maintains that there are basically three kinds of such problems: meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice; and these three problems together, he believes, form what he calls the substructure of religion; that is, all religions are but the varying responses to the manifestations of the changing pattern of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice in individual

as well as societal lives. To put it differently, Yinger holds that all the problems that man considers as empirically unsolvable--and thus to be coped with by religious means--can be shown to be the transformations of the underlying and more general problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. To explore empirically whether the problems that the respondents regard as permanent and enduring for mankind can indeed be reduced to the triple problem of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, they were asked the following question: "What do you consider the one most fundamental or important issue for the human race; that is, what do you see as the basic and permanent question for mankind, the question of which all others are only parts?" The results are summarized in Table 5.1.

Before analyzing the figures given in Table 5.1, it is important to point out how Yinger classified and coded the reported problems into different categories. According to Yinger's codebook (1973), the problems the respondents perceived as "permanent" for mankind were classified as follows:

01. Meaning of Life - Meaninglessness (Answers mentioning individual development, self-understanding, self-identity, living a meaningful life, purpose of existence, the purpose of the universe, questions of immortality vs. mortality and life and death, and questions of what the future holds primarily).

TABLE 5.1 Responses to the Open-Ended Question of the Fundamental and Permanent Problems of Mankind
(in percent)

| Response | Nationality ^a | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| Meaning - meaninglessness | 55.9 | 44.7 | 7.7 | 17.4 | 24.6 |
| Justice - injustice | 2.2 | 5.0 | 8.5 | 5.2 | 3.7 |
| Suffering reduction | ---- | 9.9 | 47.2 | 22.9 | 26.2 |
| Meaning - justice | ---- | 7.1 | 4.2 | 5.8 | 5.4 |
| Meaning - suffering | 5.1 | 7.8 | ---- | 7.1 | 8.4 |
| Injustice - suffering | 3.7 | 2.8 | 6.3 | 8.1 | 13.5 |
| Meaning, suffering, and and injustice all men- tioned or implied | 27.2 | 9.9 | 10.6 | 26.8 | 6.9 |
| Religion specified | 3.7 | 2.8 | 0.7 | 4.5 | 1.3 |
| Education and knowledge specified | ---- | 2.1 | 2.8 | 0.6 | 2.0 |
| Morality and character development | 0.7 | 5.0 | 8.5 | 0.6 | 5.7 |
| Sex specified | ---- | 0.7 | 1.4 | ---- | 0.3 |
| Family life specified | ---- | 1.4 | 2.1 | ---- | 0.1 |
| Other | 1.5 | 0.7 | ---- | 1.0 | 1.9 |
| Number of cases | 136 | 141 | 142 | 310 | 983 |
| No response | 2 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 22 |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

02. Justice - Injustice (Answers mentioning end of inequality, exploitation, prejudice, elimination of repression of thought and expression).
03. Ending Suffering (Answers mentioning the question of survival, the provision of fundamental needs, the use of technology to end suffering, population explosion, need for economic growth, or an end to poverty, removal of suffering, need for conservation, energy).
04. Meaning and Justice (Answers mentioning combinations such as eternal life combined with reduced injustice, equality of individuals and nations resulting from tolerance and understanding, need for love between peoples and mutual respect. Category includes freedom).
05. Meaning and Suffering Reduction (Answers mentioning living the good life, search for happiness, relation with fellow man and environment for the good life, contentment/fulfillment).
06. Injustice and Suffering Reduction (Answers mentioning war and peace, peace, survival in a way to satisfy needs and promote justice and equality, elimination of human suffering, living together in peace, how to better world).
07. Meaning, Justice, Suffering all Mentioned or Implied (in answers such as mutual understanding and harmonious living, achieving understanding among all, love[when unmodified]).
08. Religion Specified (as in answers mentioning God's existence, the religious, spiritual side of life, the importance of personal belief in God, the relation between man and God, how to love God).
09. Education and Knowledge Specified (Answers focusing on how to know the truth, attain true knowledge, be rational and logical, need for improved education).
10. Mention of Morality and Character Development (Answers mentioning need to learn to live the right life, to learn to live with/without such moral characteristics as greed, evil, virtue,

belief, courage, confidence, humanity, righteousness.

- 11. Sex or Sexual Instinct Specially Emphasized
- 12. Family Life Specified
- 80. Other and Don't Know
- 99. No Answer

Inspection of Table 5.1 indicates that, in each sample, the questions of meaning, suffering, and injustice were considered, singly or in combination, by the overwhelming majority of the students as the permanent and fundamental problems for mankind. Only between 6 to 16 percent of the students failed to mention issues related at least to one of these three problems. Yet, Table 5.1 also reveals considerable variations in the number of problems that are seen as fundamental and permanent for mankind across the samples. Forty-six to 63 percent reported just one problem, 9 to 29 percent referred to two (in varying combinations), and only 7 to 27 percent named all three. The significance of these variations to Yinger's thesis of the substructure of religion will be discussed shortly.

If we add up the proportion of the students who mentioned any one of the problems of meaning, suffering, and injustice that appears either in the single or in the multiple problem categories for each national group and

for each of the problems, the following pattern emerges as shown in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2 Responses to the Open-Ended Question of the Fundamental and Permanent Problems of Mankind
(in percent)

| Response | Nationality ^a | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| Meaning | 88.2 | 69.5 | 22.5 | 57.1 | 45.3 |
| Suffering | 36.0 | 30.4 | 64.1 | 64.9 | 55.0 |
| Injustice | 33.1 | 23.8 | 29.6 | 45.9 | 29.5 |
| Other | 5.9 | 12.0 | 15.5 | 6.7 | 11.7 |
| Number of cases | 136 | 141 | 142 | 310 | 983 |
| No response | 2 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 22 |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thailand; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

It becomes immediately clear that all the three problems appeared in each group, but the pattern of their distribution differs from one group to another. While among the Japanese and the Koreans the problem of meaning captured far more attention than any other problem; among the Thai, the problem of suffering assumed the most importance. Among the New Zealand-Australian students, the distribution of the themes looks smoother than among any other national group: no issue as conspicuously outweighed

the others as in the Japanese, Korean, or the Thai cases, even though a rank order of the themes is evident. The Chinese pattern resembles the New Zealand-Australian one, but the proportion of the Chinese students referring to each of the problems was much smaller.

Judging from the preceding findings, one can say the following about the Chinese students. When the three issues of meaning, suffering, and injustice are taken together, the overall percentage of the Chinese students considering these issues as man's enduring concerns is not different from those found in other national groups. Like students from other samples, most of the Chinese saw these three issues, taken singly or in combination, as the problems mankind has to contend with perennially. However, when these issues are seen separately, as shown in Table 5.2, the Chinese do differ from other national groups. Thus, compared with the Japanese, Korean, and Thai students, the Chinese, when asked to name man's basic and permanent problems, were less inclined to place emphasis on just one single issue; the majority of them were interested in the problem of suffering, but close to half of them were also concerned about the problem of meaning. In contrast to the New Zealand-Australian students, the Chinese are far less sensitive to the issue of injustice; on this issue, the Chinese are much like

their Asian counterparts.

Search For Interpretations

Given the varying combination of the proportions of the students referring to the problem of meaning, suffering, and injustice as man's fundamental concerns in the different national samples, one is led naturally to ask what made the students perceive these issues the way they reported. As has been pointed out before, part of the cross-sample differences in placing importance on the issues of meaning, suffering, and injustice as the permanent problems for mankind could be attributable to the disproportionate distribution of the students in various categories of the background variables; yet, controlling these background variables in each sample does not make much difference in the distributions of these three themes as evidenced in Table 5.3. Of course, some exceptions did occur when the number of cases were very small.

How people view the world is greatly determined by their cultural tradition, national and personal experiences. It is in these that we are going to look for explanations that may account for the perceptual differences found above.

Reasons for the Japanese Students' Emphasis on Meaning

That the overwhelming proportion of the Japanese

TABLE 5.3 Perceived Permanent Problems for Mankind by Gender, Father's Occupation, Religion, Educational Level, and Academic Major
(in percent)

| Permanent Problem | Nationality | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | JPN (n=138) | KRA (n=144) | TLD (n=154) | NZ&A (n=310) | CNA (n=1005) |
| TOTAL SAMPLE | | | | | |
| Meaning | 88.2 | 69.5 | 22.5 | 57.1 | 45.3 |
| Suffering | 36.0 | 30.4 | 64.1 | 64.9 | 55.0 |
| Injustice | 33.1 | 23.8 | 29.6 | 45.9 | 29.5 |
| Other | 5.9 | 12.0 | 15.5 | 6.7 | 11.7 |
| Number of cases | 136 | 141 | 142 | 310 | 983 |
| GENDER | | | | | |
| <u>Male</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 91.0 | 62.9 | 19.7 | 50.0 | 42.2 |
| Suffering | 24.3 | 37.0 | 64.5 | 71.0 | 57.2 |
| Injustice | 21.2 | 30.8 | 25.0 | 38.8 | 27.2 |
| Other | 3.0 | 10.9 | 19.6 | 5.1 | 12.8 |
| Number of cases | 33 | 81 | 76 | 134 | 506 |
| <u>Female</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 87.5 | 78.3 | 25.8 | 63.1 | 48.7 |
| Suffering | 39.9 | 21.6 | 63.7 | 60.8 | 52.5 |
| Injustice | 36.9 | 26.7 | 34.9 | 52.0 | 32.1 |
| Other | 6.9 | 15.0 | 10.6 | 7.1 | 10.0 |
| Number of cases | 103 | 60 | 66 | 171 | 475 |

TABLE 5.3 (cont.)

| Permanent Problem | Nationality | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | JPN (n=138) | KRA (n=144) | TLD (n=154) | NZ&A (n=310) | CNA (n=1005) |
| FATHER'S OCCUPATION | | | | | |
| <u>Professional, go- vernment, mili- tary, and large firm official</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 80.8 | 99.9 | 19.1 | 56.0 | 49.8 |
| Suffering | 34.6 | 16.6 | 23.9 | 44.1 | 53.9 |
| Injustice | 34.6 | 16.1 | 71.4 | 67.8 | 32.8 |
| Other | 11.5 | ---- | 9.5 | 5.1 | 10.5 |
| Number of cases | 26 | 12 | 21 | 59 | 219 |
| <u>Small firm owner and white-collar worker</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 90.0 | 63.9 | 18.7 | 55.9 | 49.8 |
| Suffering | 38.5 | 32.6 | 66.0 | 63.4 | 53.9 |
| Injustice | 34.3 | 22.6 | 27.5 | 44.8 | 32.8 |
| Other | 4.0 | 16.3 | 17.6 | 10.4 | 10.5 |
| Number of cases | 99 | 80 | 91 | 134 | 219 |
| <u>Manual worker, armed force (non- officer), and un- specified occupa- tion</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 85.7 | 74.9 | 53.9 | 59.4 | 43.9 |
| Suffering | 14.3 | 37.5 | 46.2 | 65.7 | 53.9 |
| Injustice | 14.3 | 34.7 | 46.2 | 49.5 | 26.7 |
| Other | 14.3 | 9.4 | 15.4 | 2.7 | 12.8 |
| Number of cases | 7 | 32 | 13 | 111 | 431 |

TABLE 5.3 (cont.)

| Permanent Problem | Nationality | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | JPN (n=138) | KRA (n=144) | TLD (n=154) | NZ&A (n=310) | CNA (n=1005) |
| RELIGION | | | | | |
| <u>Buddhist</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 84.6 | 88.0 | 22.6 | 50.0 | 31.8 |
| Suffering | 38.5 | 37.5 | 66.2 | 83.3 | 72.2 |
| Injustice | 23.1 | 25.0 | 29.1 | 33.3 | 14.0 |
| Other | 7.7 | 12.5 | 14.5 | ---- | 9.3 |
| Number of cases | 13 | 8 | 124 | 6 | 44 |
| <u>Christian</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 82.3 | 71.2 | ---- | 56.5 | 50.8 |
| Suffering | 29.4 | 35.6 | 20.0 | 57.1 | 43.6 |
| Injustice | 23.5 | 28.9 | 20.0 | 44.5 | 27.8 |
| Other | 14.7 | 13.3 | 60.0 | 7.5 | 17.6 |
| Number of cases | 34 | 45 | 5 | 190 | 127 |
| <u>Other</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 100.0 | 100.0 | 40.0 | 60.0 | 30.0 |
| Suffering | 40.0 | 50.0 | 60.0 | 90.0 | 60.0 |
| Injustice | 40.0 | 50.0 | 40.0 | 80.0 | 35.0 |
| Other | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | 17.5 |
| Number of cases | 5 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 40 |
| <u>None</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 89.3 | 64.7 | ---- | 53.3 | 45.7 |
| Suffering | 37.3 | 30.9 | 33.3 | 71.4 | 56.3 |
| Injustice | 37.3 | 23.5 | 33.3 | 40.5 | 30.3 |
| Other | 1.3 | 10.4 | 33.3 | 3.3 | 10.1 |
| Number of cases | 75 | 68 | 3 | 94 | 771 |

TABLE 5.3 (cont.)

| Permanent Problem | Nationality | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| | (n=138) | (n=144) | (n=154) | (n=310) | (n=1005) |
| EDUCATIONAL LEVEL | | | | | |
| <u>Freshman</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 86.6 | 68.9 | 28.2 | 59.5 | 42.4 |
| Suffering | 41.8 | 31.9 | 64.1 | 63.6 | 57.3 |
| Injustice | 38.8 | 25.3 | 28.2 | 44.6 | 31.3 |
| Other | 7.5 | 12.5 | 15.4 | 6.5 | 8.2 |
| Number of cases | 67 | 135 | 37 | 195 | 269 |
| <u>Sophomore</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 89.9 | 100.0 | 18.0 | 53.9 | 47.0 |
| Suffering | 31.6 | ---- | 69.4 | 70.2 | 52.8 |
| Injustice | 30.0 | ---- | 23.3 | 50.2 | 26.6 |
| Other | 3.4 | ---- | 16.7 | 6.4 | 11.8 |
| Number of cases | 60 | 4 | 72 | 80 | 256 |
| <u>Junior</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 88.9 | ---- | 27.2 | 43.9 | 44.5 |
| Suffering | 22.2 | ---- | 63.3 | 56.4 | 53.6 |
| Injustice | 11.1 | ---- | 36.3 | 37.7 | 31.4 |
| Other | 11.1 | ---- | 13.6 | 12.6 | 15.0 |
| Number of cases | 9 | 0 | 22 | 16 | 227 |
| <u>Senior</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | ---- | 50.0 | 28.6 | 58.8 | 47.2 |
| Suffering | ---- | 50.0 | 28.6 | 64.7 | 56.7 |
| Injustice | ---- | ---- | 57.2 | 52.9 | 29.5 |
| Other | ---- | 50.0 | 14.3 | ---- | 11.5 |
| Number of cases | 0 | 2 | 7 | 17 | 231 |

TABLE 5.3 (cont.)

| Permanent Problem | Nationality | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | JPN (n=138) | KRA (n=144) | TLD (n=154) | NZ&A (n=310) | CNA (n=1005) |
| ACADEMIC MAJOR | | | | | |
| <u>Humanities</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 91.5 | 70.9 | 32.7 | 54.7 | 47.8 |
| Suffering | 42.9 | 25.3 | 62.9 | 56.9 | 55.1 |
| Injustice | 34.3 | 22.8 | 37.0 | 49.6 | 29.5 |
| Other | 8.7 | 16.5 | 18.5 | 7.2 | 10.6 |
| Number of cases | 35 | 79 | 27 | 139 | 285 |
| <u>Social sciences</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 92.7 | ---- | 11.9 | 60.4 | 54.4 |
| Suffering | 25.4 | ---- | 81.9 | 74.0 | 53.5 |
| Injustice | 25.4 | ---- | 19.1 | 45.9 | 31.0 |
| Other | 3.6 | ---- | 11.9 | 5.2 | 7.1 |
| Number of cases | 55 | 0 | 42 | 96 | 127 |
| <u>Natural sciences</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | ---- | 100.0 | 18.0 | 54.6 | 39.5 |
| Suffering | ---- | ---- | 61.6 | 69.7 | 59.1 |
| Injustice | ---- | ---- | 25.7 | 40.0 | 26.4 |
| Other | ---- | ---- | 20.6 | 7.2 | 10.6 |
| Number | 0 | 1 | 39 | 55 | 28 |
| <u>Business, law, and medicine</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 75.0 | 66.7 | 35.5 | 71.5 | 43.6 |
| Suffering | 50.0 | 38.3 | 48.4 | 71.5 | 52.9 |
| Injustice | 50.0 | 28.4 | 45.2 | 42.9 | 31.1 |
| Other | ---- | 8.4 | 6.4 | 14.3 | 14.3 |
| Number of cases | 4 | 60 | 31 | 7 | 344 |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

students focused their attention on the problem of meaning as man's most important concern can probably, to a large extent, be accounted for by the particular postwar situation in Japan. Since the Japanese defeat in 1945, faith in the divinity of the emperor and the holy mission of the Japanese nation, which had for centuries animated and commanded the life of the Japanese people, was totally discredited; and the whole nation was thrown into an anomie unprecedented in the Japanese history. In light of this sudden about-face of the emperor system, many found it impossible to believe anything (McFarland, 1967:224); others, having lost interest in the national goal and dedication, indulged themselves in the intensive pursuit of personal happiness and developed an unexampled egotism and eccentricism (Ishida, 1971:41-42; Minami, 1971:13-33); still others, some 20 percent of the whole Japanese population, took refuge in the great variety of the so-called "new religions" that mushroomed in post-war Japan to meet people's emotional needs (McFarland, 1967:7).

This loss of sense of national identity was also reflected, especially among the older people, in the strong nostalgia for dedication and discipline of pre-war times, as illustrated in the spectacular karakiri of a very popular novelist by the name of Michima in 1969 "for the purpose of arousing the Japanese conscience from

its beguiling slumber in economic prosperity and its accompanying moral decadence"(Miwa, 1975:140) and as a plea to the people to seek the "true Japan" (Reischauer, 1977:409). In the early 1970s, there was a prolonged and widespread debate on being Japanese; "a spate of books and journal articles appeared asking what it meant to be a Japanese" (Reischauer, 1977:409). After an extended visit to postwar Japan, the illustrious Protestant theologian, Paul Tillich (1963:1) remarked that "present-day Japan is looking for a vocational symbol." McFarland (1967:38) noted that most Japanese at all levels seem to acknowledge a "spiritual recovery" as one of the nation's most urgent needs.

Rapid urbanization and growing material well-being have not solved the fundamental problems of life; instead, along with their concomitant high crime rate, juvenile delinquency, increase in divorce rate, and many other problems shared with industrialized societies (Macki, 1972:141-145) tended to make the problem of meaning seem more pressing.

Commenting on the intensive search of self-identification in postwar Japan, Beardsley (1965:365) made the following remark:

In recent years more than ever in the past, self-perception has come to pose a sharp enigma: What am I by myself? Heretofore, group membership roles

answered most questions of identity, but wartime defeat discredited the classical corporate family and most other traditional norms of group identification, and wide-ranging postwar reforms had the common intention of liberating the individual persons. Such liberation posed unfamiliar problems to persons whose identity had been clarified by their relation to the group (as an arm is defined by its belonging to the body). To be sure, the conundrum of individuation existed earlier; the changes after the World War II, however, gave it a keener edge. In everyday life each person encounters situations that remind him to be aware of his position and functions apart from any permanent, life-long group.

Reischauer (1977:146-156) sees the Japanese pre-occupation with the search of self-identity as a result of the strictness and uniformity of the "tightly knit" and "cloyingly compact" Japanese society. This is mirrored not only in the popularity of what the Japanese call "I novel"--a literary genre distinguished for "the introspective, almost embarrassingly frank examination of the writer's feelings in the basically hostile environment," (Reischauer, 1977:148), but also in the explosiveness of the student movement in the late 1960s and other youth movements which he characterized as "a search to break out of the rigid molds and escape the smothering presence of social constraints" and as a "drift from older Japanese norms toward self-expression (Reischauer, 1977:147). Reischauer also pointed out that college students, in their groping for the concept of individual self-expression, often bypassed the word "individualism"

which has a connotation of selfishness in Japanese in favor of the world "subjectivity" (shutaisei), in the sense of one being the active subject rather than the passive object of one's life, to make sure what they meant in their search for self-identity.

In a nationwide survey of the Japanese college students, Basabe (1968:65-66) found that, upon entering college, the Japanese students showed an increasing interest in the meaning of life; yet realizing that it was the single-minded belief of the preceding generation in the divine emperor system that brought ruin, defeat, and humiliation to Japan, they in general displayed an unconscious distaste for anything that demands absolute allegiance. Many students who were more sensitive to the problem pondered on it but often got lost in the reflection; others sought guidance in Western literature, but most of them lacked the necessary background to grasp the Western philosophical discourses. Unable to find any satisfactory solution, many took a passive stand, by simply resigning themselves to "fate." All these considered, it seems reasonable to assume that the high concentration of the Japanese students on the meaning of life as man's most basic problem was probably due to their projection of a problem they and their fellow countrymen felt as particularly acute compared with the

rest of the world.

Reasons for Emphasis on Meaning among the Korean Students

The priority given by the Korean students to the question of meaning as man's fundamental problem seems to stem from a different source. As will be seen in the following pages, the Korean students are more pessimistic, cynical, and resigned than students from any other national group. They tend to see more suffering, injustice, and meaninglessness; both in their own lives and in the lives of other people, and they show more distrust in political efforts in reducing suffering and injustice. It might very well be that it was this pessimism, powerlessness, and resignation that made a large majority of the Korean students feel the necessity and importance of giving some meaning to life to make it bearable.

The Korean people have had the misfortune to have to endure, in recent times, first the ruthless exploitation of the Japanese colonial rule, and then the incurable corruption and the absolute dictatorship of their own government, notoriously under Syngman Rhee and Park Chung-hee. Mustering various evidence to support him, Lee (1975:21) described the Rhee regime as follows:

Under Rhee (1948-1960), democratic institutions were "disregarded, overridden, corrupted, or turned against themselves." Civil rights were often disregarded, and due process of law was more often laughed at than taken seriously by the very officials

who were supposed to enforce the law. The press was often censored, or its freedom of expression otherwise severely restricted. Numerous newspapers and magazines were closed down by the government, some temporarily and others permanently. Reporters, editors, and publishers were all frequent targets of government persecution. Many were arrested, interrogated, and tried. Some were punished with trumped-up charges. Terrorism through hired gangsters was resorted to not infrequently.

Political opposition was in general suppressed and discouraged, with all resources at the command of the government thrown against opposition politicians and groups, sometimes legally and more often illegally or unconstitutionally. When any group became a serious threat to the Rhee rule, it was resolutely curbed. Even the Constitution itself became a helpless pawn in Rhee's political game as it was unconstitutionally amended twice and violated numerous times.

It was pervasive evils such as these that led to the nationwide "student revolution," including elementary students, in April, 1960, that forced Rhee to step down (Oh, 1975:121-124; Stone, 1974:130-143; Chung, 1962:2).

Under Park (1961-197), the Korean people did not fare much better; the same evil persisted in even greater intensity. Ever since the mid-1960s, civil dissidence and student protest against pervasive social injustice and official corruption, rigged elections, and disrespect for human rights and political freedom under the Park government became an on-going phenomenon in South Korea (Han, 1975, 1980; Oh, 1975:127-130; Vreeland et al., 1975:165-194). Commenting of the civil disturbances and campus turmoil in 1971, around the time when the Korean data used in this study was collected,

Korea's Annual (1972:37-41) reported that "the year 1971 witnesses a series of civil disturbances which were unprecedented in their violence and severity.", and again that "the year 1971 was a most turbulent period for colleges and universities in the history of the Republic of Korea. They were riddled with rallies and demonstrations all through the year, which finally resulted in the expulsion of more than 180 student leaders and their temporary disclosure." Intolerant toward dissent, free speech, civil liberties, and other rudiments of a free society, Park, in 1972, dissolved the National Assembly, banned political parties as well as political assembly, and changed the Constitution that gave him a virtually unlimited power and tenure, making the whole nation "honeycombed with Korean CIA informers" and impregnated with fear" (Vreeland et al., 1975:165-166).

Ecomonically, despite the spectacular achievement from the middle 1960's, not until the 1970's was there much improvement in the plight of the vastly poor, rural masses as reflected in the 20 percent of the whole rural population who left the villages to look for a better life in the cities during the 1960's alone (Rhee, 1973; Keim, 1974; Vreeland et al., 1975:93-95; Ho, 1979).

Even writing in 1975, Vreeland and her associates observed that, due to the unabated population pressure

in rural areas and the continuous concentration of power and wealth in the cities, Korea, as a whole, was, at best, still a relatively poor country. Commenting on the conditions of the poor masses, Vreeland et al., (1975:167) said that

For the economically depressed there was neither the comforting prospect of better living conditions nor a workable machinery through which their grievances could be effectively heard and acted by the government, which in most cases sided with employers in the interest of industrial peace.

Rhee (1973:684) pointed out the danger of this situation:

One of the most serious problems in recent years--especially after the mid-1960s--is the rapid widening gap between the rich and the poor whose income is threatened by uncontrolled inflation, ill-managed taxation, and a host of other problems, despite the nominal "rise" in their income as shown in largely meaningless national statistics. The present discrepancy is without doubt far more pronounced than under the two regimes that preceded the military takeover. In addition, while it was generally true prior to 1961 that the "rich" took enormous care not to overtly "demonstrate" their wealth, the same is not true today, creating a yet undetermined psychological problem of vast demoralization in the nation. Undoubtedly, this could in time create not only politically embarrassing problems for the government but more specifically produce conditions of political opposition far more revolutionary in nature than ever before in Korea's modern history.

Despite the increasing injustice and the persistent poverty in the nation, why did the Korean students still choose the question of meaning as the enduring concern for mankind? As Vreeland and her colleagues (1975:102) pointed out, two major forces, Confucianism and Christianity, have been most instrumental in shaping social

values and social organization in South Korea. From elementary school on, Confucianism, as part of education, imparted to the Korean students a preference for moralism and idealism over material comfort (Oh, 1975:146), and Christianity taught them to place a high value on democracy and individualism (Kim, 1973). With these and their youthful idealism, the students tended to style themselves as the conscience of the nation and felt the future of the nation lay on their shoulders. Yet, mounting dissidence and protest were met with increasing intolerance and oppression; the government became more uncompromising and more heavy-handed (Oh, 1975; Han, 1974, 1980). When fight for highly cherished values is continuously frustrated and the prospect for any improvement becomes increasingly slim, life tends to lose meaning, especially for people with keen, educated minds. What Chung (1962:53) said about the mood of the students under the Rhee regime can be equally applied to the feelings of those under the Park government:

While political corruption was undoubtedly the chief agent in precipitating the uprising, the students were not motivated by political considerations. The issues were moral and spiritual, not political. Evils of every kinds were steadily encroaching upon the supreme human values of liberty and justice. Without these precious possessions, life would be empty and meaningless. Cynicism was increasing, pessimism was the prevailing mood, and no one had a word of hope or salvation.

This probably explains why the Korean students singled out, in spite of their experience of a great deal of injustice and their perception of the undiminished property for most of their fellow citizens, the question of meaning as the most important problem for mankind rather than injustice and suffering.

Reasons for Emphasis on Suffering among the Thai Students

The reason why the Thai students placed suffering over injustice and meaning as the fundamental problem of mankind appears to be clear. As shown in Table 4.1, 91 percent of the students in the Thai sample are Buddhist, and according to the Office of the Prime Minister (1964:60), 94 percent of the Thai population belong to the Buddhist religion. For the Thai, Buddhism is, as Blanchard (1958:11-22) noted, "the historic wellspring from which flow the nation's metaphysics, its art and literature, its ethic and morality, and many of its mores, folkways, and festivals." About the principle concern of Buddhism, Bowker (1970:237) stated that

Awareness of suffering, without any pretense or deception about it, lies in the very root and foundation of Buddhism . . . Of all religions, Buddhism is the one that concentrates most immediately and directly on suffering.

Indeed, in unadulterated Buddhism, existence itself is seen as pain and sorrow. The preoccupation of Buddhism can be summarized in capsule form as: the existence of

suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path that leads to the cessation of suffering, commonly called the Four Noble Truths (Bowker, 1970:237). The pronounced concentration on eliminating poverty and other social ills along with the deemphasis on some of the traditional Buddhist beliefs among modern Thai intelligentsia (Blanchard, 1958:116-117) is a further proof of the Thais' preoccupation with suffering. Thus, it should come as no surprise that suffering was on top of man's continuing and fundamental problems among the Thai students.

Since the coup in 1932 that ended the absolute monarchy, Thailand has been, with only some brief interludes, ruled by a self-serving clique headed by the military. Coup and counter-coup have been the normal means employed by one clique against another to gain the control of the government. As Riggs (1966:368) put it

the successive coups d'etat by which ruling circles are modified and replaced have become as much a constitutional formula for changing elites as the periodical electoral battles in the United States, or the cabinet crisis of France during the Third and Fourth Republics.

Though all cliques claim to govern under the rules of the constitution, but in reality they act in the spirit of arbitrary power; fraud, force, and corruption are the rules of the game. Their members are not united so much

by a common ideology as by expediency and mutual enrichment from office. Political freedom is often suppressed, and criticism against the government severely punished (Blanchard, 1958:14; Wilson, 1962:57; Williams, 1975:431; Scott, 1976:344-366). Describing the coup in 1971, around the time when the Thai data used in this study was collected, Neher (1975:1099) noted that

In a coup against all opposition or potential opposition forces, the military seized power by abrogating the 1968 constitution, dissolving the National Assembly, and declaring martial law. The articulate citizenry, many with a western education and sympathetic to western values, were offended by the military's retreat to rigid oligarchical government and by the fact that the military was increasingly ruling in its self-interest. For the first time, a number of elite groups, including intellectuals, students and certain high-ranking military officials and politicians, were closed off from the center of power and were disillusioned by the regime's dictatorial methods.

In the past, politically, partly because the arbitrariness and suppression of the government rarely reached the villagers with full force (Blanchard, 1958:14-15) and partly because the doctrine of karma fully justified their position in the social hierarchy (Ingersoll, 1975:219-251), the Thai peasant generally lacked class consciousness and sense of popular revolt. Economically, because most of the Thai peasants could make a satisfactory living on the land they owned on the one hand, and their religion taught them to reduce desire and to lay little importance on material goods, they were pretty content

with their lot and felt no need to change their occupation (Blanchard, 1958:15-17; Henderson et al., 1971:85-87). Indeed, "in general, they do not seem to envy the city dweller's way of life with its traffic congestion, crowded housing, bars, restaurants, and many establishments of amusement" (Henderson et al., 1971:86). Even the Thai intellectuals, as Phillips (1975:324-357) pointed out, did not in general challenge their traditional culture and provided new directions but sought to adjust it to the contemporary trends, and thus created little value conflict among the people. The Thai students were also noted for their political quiescence and had been described as passive, career-oriented, and innert members of the political system (Mezey, 1975:499-502; Girling, 1981:171).

However, in the recent years, modernization with its accompanying values and consequences have begun to change not only the structure of the Thai society, but also the consciousness of the Thai people. In the rural areas, commercialization of rice production and its attendant concentration of landholdings in the hands of the well-to-do and the increasing indebtedness among the poor, growing population and the consequent fragmentation of arable land, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, along with the unusually heavy taxation on the rice premium and lack of legitimate channel for

expressing grievances, all tend to fracture and stratify the rural societies and created unprecedented economic pressure, psychological insecurity, sense of deprivation, inequity, and bitterness among the peasants (Williams, 1975; Neher, 1975; Elliott, 1978:104-110; Girling, 1981: 61-103). It is understandable when Girling (1981:268) maintains that "the activities of the insurgent movements in Thailand arise almost entirely out of local needs and resources. External support was at no time very great and in recent years has dwindled considerably."

The Thai economic growth reached a plateau and then began to decline in the early 1970s. And most of the increase in GNP during previous prosperous years has not been used for the benefit of the people at large; instead, it went to the officer corps, big business, and big landowners (Scott, 1976). Hit by recession, inflation, and corruption, the standard of living of, not only the general public, but also the salaried bureaucrats, began to deteriorate and caused a widespread resentment and discontent. Describing the economic situation in 1971, and particularly its consequences in the city, Neher (1975:1100) said that

In 1971 the economic growth rate dropped precipitously, from 11.8% per year during the latter half of the 1960s to 2.8% in 1971. Factory jobs became more scarce as a 7.5% urban migration rate caused large pockets of unemployment and vast new slum areas in

Bangkok. For years, labor unions and strikers had been illegal. Urban laborers were the most exploited class in the kingdom; working conditions were often sub-standard; pension and compensation programs did not exist; there was no right to legal redress, nor any provision for job security.

The Thai students as a political pressure group began with their protest against the retention of martial law, the ban on public assembly, and their running their own student candidates on the platform of "clean hand and incorruptibility" in 1968 which culminated in the famous bloody "October Revolution" in October, 1973, which overthrew the Thanom military regime and established a democratic government (Darling, 1974). This democratic government was in turn, as the normal Thai political course had run, overthrown by a military coup in 1976 (Zimmermann, 1978; Girling, 1981:187-206).

The whole political scene of Thailand is well reflected in the following words:

Union organizers have been jailed and peasant activists assassinated in order to eliminate popular leaders and to intimidate their followers into accepting low wages, poor conditions, or exorbitant land rents. Student demonstrators have been attacked by hired thugs, and opposition party rallies have been bombed. Even though a number of people have been killed and many wounded in these attacks, as a result of influence or pressures "from above," police investigations have failed to reach a conclusion or have been called off. Such activities were particularly evident during the democratic period; indeed, their purpose was to bring it to an end. (Girling, 1981:135).

We have taken pains to show the similarity between

the Thai and Korean political and economical situations around the time when the data for both student groups were collected. Why then was the proportion of Thai students reporting the question of meaning as man's fundamental problem three times smaller than the proportion of the Korean students, as shown in Table 5.2.

The reason probably should be sought in the hopeful, optimistic, and self-confident mood of the Thai students that was completely different from the sense of pessimism, frustration, and powerlessness prevalent among the Korean university students around 1971. As Zimmermann, (1974:514-515) observed, starting as early as 1969 or 1970, discussions, lectures, seminars on a democratic Thailand were held within the classrooms and without, on and off campuses. Books and papers, many secretly, were published and distributed. The Thai students saw a bright future for themselves as well as for their countrymen. Zimmermann (1974:515) then said about their temper:

The coup against Parliament in November 1971 which threw out the 1968 Constitution and the Parliament acted thereunder only served to inspire further commitment and effort on the part of the people to bring about an end, eventually, to military dominance of the Thai political system. This "cause" became the core of their message to university students throughout 1972. Now the students, in turn, have acquired a legitimacy of their own and a unique position, reenforced by an expectation that they could play an ombudsman type role in future Thai politics

vis-a-vis both the Parliament and the government bureaucracy. Their role could be to guard against excessive concern with narrow inter-bureaucratic political and personal interest that compromise the justice and welfare interests of the people as a whole.

When one is full of hope and confidence that his expectations will be fulfilled, life seems to be meaningful, and all sacrifices and hardships are easy to bear. It was probably this optimistic mood at the inception of their "political revolution," coupled with their religious preoccupation with suffering that contributed to the lowest frequency among all national groups with which the Thai students perceived the question of meaning as the fundamental problem of mankind.

Reasons for the New Zealand-Australian Students' Perceptual Pattern of Meaninglessness, Suffering, and Injustice as Man's Fundamental Problems

As we have pointed out above, among all the national student groups, variations in the proportions of the New Zealand-Australian respondents who reported meaning, suffering, and injustice as man's persistent problems are the smallest. Since all the New Zealand-Australian students have been reared in societies animated by Christian beliefs and values, and since concern with the problem of purpose of man and the universe is one of the dominant characteristics of Christianity, one should expect that the proportion of the New Zealand-Australian

respondents considering meaning as the enduring and important question for mankind would be high.

That close to half of the New Zealand-Australian students (46 percent), the highest proportion of all student groups, regarded injustice as man's basic problem requires some explanation. Both the New Zealanders and the Australians value the principle of equality. The shared strong sense of egalitarianism among them originated, not only from the Christian belief that all men are created equal, but also from the early colonial days when in both countries, with widespread shortages of labor, the egalitarian philosophy of "Jack is as good as his master" became prevalent (Jackson and Harre', 1969:61; Harris, 1962:57-59). On the importance of the principle of equality in New Zealand society Jackson and Harre (1969:115) remarked that

It has been suggested that not only is this the cardinal principle of New Zealand life, but that as a principle it amounts to a national fetish, often operating in a completely indiscriminate way, depriving the nation as a whole of advancement for fear that some sections may prosper disproportionately to others. So the emphasis in the economy is on the benefit to the individual and the importance of family life (as an extension of that of the individual), rather on a class, no matter how defined.

Harris (1962:57) called egalitarianism the Australian moral imperative that is embedded in the principle of "mateship," a well-known Australian national institution

(Taft, 1962:194). Speaking of the importance of egalitarianism in the Australian society, McGregor (1966:47-48) wrote the following:

Egalitarianism, in fact, is the persistent motif which runs through Australian culture and the people themselves. One can say many things about Australians; that they are individualistic, informal, easy-going, frank, good-natured--all more or less correct, though there are many Australians who are none of these things--but the feeling that one is as good as another is the most characteristic quality of social relations, and as an ideal it has power over executive and working man alike.

People living in societies where egalitarianism is a national passion and commands almost scrupulous devotion tend psychologically to be extremely sensitive to anything that spells injustice, not only in their own lives, but also in the lives of the people of the rest of the world. Thus, it seems little wonder that a considerable number of the New Zealand-Australian students referred to injustice as the permanent problem of mankind.

Similar psychological process may, at least in part, explain why the New Zealand-Australian students who are among those enjoying the highest standards of living in the world still gave priority to suffering as the fundamental and persistent concern of human lot. Persons living under poor conditions tend, unless their expectations are awakened, to be hardened to suffering; accustomed to hardships, tend to become less conscious of their own plight and the plight of others as a serious

problem. This could, in part, account for why few Korean students (30 percent) laid emphasis on suffering as man's most important problem, despite the fact that they have experienced, as will be seen below, a great amount of suffering personally. However, with increasing improvement in living conditions, people tend to be more sensitive to suffering; they tend to be more susceptible to suffering in their own lives as well as the misery in the lives of others. Endowed with material abundance and protected by an extensively developed welfare state, people in New Zealand and Australia enjoy a rather easy and care-free life, and thus are also susceptible to suffering.

But probably more decisive--especially considering the fact that despite their high standard of living, in contrast to two-thirds of the New Zealand-Australian students, only one-third of the Japanese respondents mentioned suffering as man's fundamental concern--is the role played by the Christian ethic. Moral values in both countries are Christian in origin, and charity is the cornerstone of the Christian ethic. Like in many other Christian countries, the New Zealanders as well as the Australians have, from their childhood, been reared, encouraged, and continuously called upon to help the poor and the needy in other countries. The well-organized

voluntary assistance associations in both countries are the standing evidences of their constant awareness of the suffering throughout the world. Describing the motives behind these voluntary assistance organizations in New Zealand, Johnson and Harre (1969:110) proudly pointed out that

One can draw clear distinction between government and voluntary aid, for the latter is so highly developed, and it is one of the most pleasant features of New Zealand life that this giving reflects a genuine spirit of humanitarianism and concern for others in less fortunate circumstances.

Reasons for the Chinese Students' Emphasis on Meaning and Suffering

As noted before, compared with the Japanese, Korean and Japanese students who gave priority to a single problem and the New Zealand-Australian respondents who gave a rather more or less balanced attention to all three problems, the Chinese students placed emphasis on two problems, meaning and suffering, as man's basic concerns. It does not seem difficult to see why more than half of the Chinese students considered suffering as man's most important question. Despite its much praised economic prosperity, Taiwan had been, until recent years, a very poor island (see, for instance, Chaffee et al., 1969:83-104). Although most students reported they had not, as will be seen below, experienced a great many hardships themselves, they had certainly seen and heard about the

misery most of the Taiwanese people had to endure. The very concept "economic miracle," so often applied to the economic development in Taiwan, both by Chinese and foreign observers, implies not only the state of the present prosperity, but also the condition of the previous poverty.

Probably most important is the effect of the study of the San Min Chu I or Three Principles of the People of Sun Yat-sen, the Founder of the Republic of China, commonly known as nationalism, democracy, and people's livelihood. The San Min Chu I is, as Walker (1973:370) put it, "a part of the whole education and life of the people--and on an intensive basis . . . a main part of the process of political socialization in Taiwan." Even in the university, the thoughts of Sun Yet-sen is a required course for all students regardless of their field of interest. The basic objective of the "Principle of People's Livelihood" is to foster economic justice and to better the lot of the underprivileged masses, and according to Sun Yat-sen, it is the prerequisite to carry out the Principle of Democracy; thus, both in theory and in practice, the Principle of the People's Livelihood has been given priority.

The Chinese students' concern with poverty and the influence of the study of the Three Principles of the People of Sun Yat-sen can be seen from the fact that out

of the 26.2 percent of the students in the single problem category in Table 5.1 who said suffering is the most important concern of mankind, 18.4 percent used the term "struggle for survival," 1.6 percent used the term "eating" or "filling stomach," 4.7 percent used the very term "people's livelihood," and only 1.6 percent referred to food, economy, energy, or overpopulation.

That the Chinese students also gave a great amount of attention to the problem of meaning as man's basic problem probably reflected, to a large extent, the traditional interest in philosophy of life among Chinese intellectuals. Since the Chinese intellectuals have seldom shown interest in the discussion of the supernatural, the questions of the creation of man or the divine purpose for human existence and the like have been of little concern to the Chinese scholars. But, the practical questions such as whether the human nature is good or bad, or what is man's relation to the universe and other fellowmen have preoccupied Chinese philosophy as well as literature and art throughout the centuries (Fung Yu-lan, 1948; Sickman and Soper, 1956; Hightower, 1950; Wang, 1968). Before World War II, there was a decade-long debate on religion, science, and philosophy of life among Chinese intellectuals and university students (Tsai, 1934; Ya-tung Library, 1926;

Chang, 1927; Huang and Hsu, 1936; Chan, 1968:223-264).

Today, compared with the students from many industrialized societies such as the United States, interest in philosophy among the Chinese students on Taiwan is strikingly high. Even Western works like those of Sartre, Camus, Russell, Dewey, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, just to name a few, are favored and often their books are sought by many university students. This certainly indicates the often observed tensions of values, curiosity, sense of uncertainty, feelings of anxiety, and exploration for new and different life styles among the college students (Ting et al., 1978; Li, 1977; Chen and Ting, 1976; Yang, 1972; Li and Yang, 1972; Appleton, 1976; Mitchel, 1972), but it undoubtedly also reflects the traditional interest in the philosophy of life of the Chinese intellectuals.

Furthermore, modernization has also taken its toll on social structure, the value system, and behavior of the Chinese on Taiwan. Its effects on the value system and behavior can be unmistakably seen in the large output of both popular and scholarly books on the art of living and philosophy of life that abound on the book market, and especially in the so-called "Chinese Culture Renaissance Movement" launched by the government in collaboration with leaders in religious, academic, cultural, and many private sectors to counter the growing

juvenile delinquency, mental disorder, materialistic view of life, and many other so-called "Western" industrial and urban ills (Wei, 1973:483-490). Appleton' (1976, 1973) found that not only college students but also high school pupils put a high premium on a meaningful life in recent years.

In addition, one factor particular to Fu-jen University and schools of its kind could also have contributed to the Chinese students' interest in the problem of meaning of life. At Fu-jen University, philosophy of life is a required course for all students attending the university. It is seen as a surrogate course for religion, which is not taught as an academic subject at universities in Taiwan. Although there are no data available to show whether students in other universities who have not attended a course of philosophy of life would have had a similar high percentage reporting meaning as man's ultimate concern, it is, at least, reasonable to assume that such a course must have some influence on students' perception of the problem of meaning as the most important question for mankind.

A Cautionary Note

It should be emphatically pointed out that the foregoing interpretations are purely speculative in nature. With practically no previous literature in this

research area to rely on, they should be treated at best as educated guesses. Many philosophers and social scientists have, in one way or another, maintained that search for meaning, happiness, and justice is a universal phenomenon. The foregoing interpretations are simply some attempts to look for factors that could, in the writer's opinion, account for, at least in part, the differences in perceiving meaning, suffering, and injustice as man's basic and persistent problems found among these five particular national student groups. These speculations were prompted by the hope that they may stir interest among other researchers to seek further factors to account for the cultural differences in perception of the importance of meaning, suffering, and injustice in human existence.

Is There a Substructure of Religion?

Before proceeding to the next section, an important question must be first addressed: Do these findings support Yinger's thesis that meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice constitute the substructure of religion? In order to make the answer to this question clear, a few points must first be made.

First, Yinger's empirical approach to religion is expressly modeled on structural linguistics; and since he

did not borrow the well-known linguistic term "deep structure," and instead, he used the term "substructure," the term must have been carefully chosen. Yet, he never clearly spelled out what he exactly means by the phrase "the substructures of religion," probably presuming everybody would understand it. He did, however, in his article "A Comparative Study of the Substructures of Religion" (1977), figuratively describe that the experiences of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice are the "roots of religion;" that these experiences constitute "the substructures that undergird all religions;" and that "religion rests upon the persistent experience of suffering, injustice, and meaninglessness."

Second, since religion is conceived by Yinger as almost as universal as language, there is in almost every adult individual and in every society a particular structural configuration of experienced meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice which gives rise to, and determines the particular form of religion of a given individual or group.

Last, when a student mentioned a particular issue as a fundamental problem for mankind, it is logical to assume that he meant implicitly that that particular issue is a fundamental problem for himself too, even though it needed not pose an immediate threat for him at the time.

With these points in mind, one has to say that the

responses of the students to the open-ended question, judged from their face value, do not lend support to Yinger's thesis that the problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice together constitute the substructure of religion. As indicated above (Table 5.1), only 7 to 27 percent of the respondents reported all these three problems as man's fundamental and permanent concerns. Even when we take each national sample as a whole (Table 5.2), in the New Zealand-Australian sample, only two problems--meaning and suffering--and in all other four samples, only one problem--either meaning or suffering--were mentioned as man's problems.

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the results from the open-ended question rejected Yinger's thesis. As we hinted before when we were discussing about Wright and D'Antonio's findings, that we are dealing here with the substructure of religion, something underlying the surface manifestations of religion. Just as one is normally not or not fully aware of the underlying grammatical structure of his language, one is in general not necessarily fully or even partly conscious of the experiential structure of problems underlying his religious activities. Yinger (1970: 6-7; 1977:73) emphatically pointed out that the fundamental concerns of human societies and individuals such as death, meaning, suffering, hostility, which our empirical knowledge

cannot deal with adequately "must be seen first of all not as a group of rationally conceived problems, but as expressions of an underlying emotional need." This should be regarded "as deep-seated emotional needs, springing from the very nature of man as an individual and as a member of society." Even though the degrees of capacity, consistency, intensity, and sensitivity to these problems are unequally distributed, and even though "among most people . . . these concerns are of relatively low saliency," "all men experience these wrenching difficulties to some degree." This explains not only why the pattern of concerns with meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice varies from individual to individual and from group to group, but also why the presence of these concerns is not necessarily always notice. Hence, when a student was asked to name the fundamental problem(s) of mankind, it was completely possible that not all three issues of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice surfaced with equal force to his consciousness; what the student reported might be only the one that was most salient to him at the time. Indeed, it was even possible that none of these issues as such came to his mind, as indicated by those who mentioned family life, sex, or faith in Jesus as man's basic concern; which Yinger did not consider as being related to any of the three themes. In addition, he might refer to something that he himself believed has nothing to

do with the issues of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, although, on reflection or according to Yinger's classificatory scheme, it does belong to either one, two, or all three issues, as in the case of good life, love, mutual respect, peace, etcetera. If this argument is given validity, the findings from the open-ended question do not support Yinger's thesis of the substructure of religion; nor do they disprove it.

CHAPTER VI

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE STATEMENTS ON MEANING, SUFFERING, INJUSTICE, RELIGION AND POLITICS

Yinger conceived religion as man's ultimate solution in dealing with the persistent threat of the problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. This concept of religion implies, as Yinger (1977:68) pointed out, three basic points:

1. a widespread interest in problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice;
2. a sense that these are persistent and intractable problems;
3. and yet a conviction that, despite their enduring quality, these problems can finally be dealt with--that chaos pushed back--by our beliefs and actions.

Hence, having explored whether the problems which the respondents regarded as fundamental and permanent for mankind can be transformed into the themes of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, Yinger went on to devise 20 Likert-type statements to determine from various angles to what extent the respondents were concerned about the problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice; to what extent they considered these problems as enduring and inescapable parts of human life; and to what degree they believed that man can cope with the continuing menace of these problems. As has been pointed out, these

20 statements have been, following Yinger, grouped under five categories: meaning, suffering, injustice, religion, and politics. For convenience of analysis, scores¹ on "fully agree" and "partly agree" responses on the one hand, and those on "partly disagree" and "fully disagree" on the other, have been combined into "agree" and "disagree" responses respectively. The results are presented in Figures 6.1 through 6.5.

The Problem of Meaning

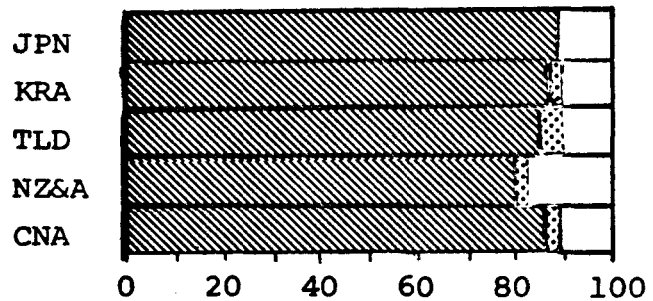
From four aspects Yinger attempted to tap the respondents' attitudes toward the question of the meaning of life: how often the respondents reflected on the purpose of life; to what extent they were interested in talking about it with others; to what degree they believed that there is some order underlying the apparent disorder of daily experiences; and whether they agreed that life really poses an incomprehensible mystery? Corresponding to these interests, he designed the following four statements:

1. I often wonder what life is all about.
2. I am not very interested in discussion of the question of the meaning of meaninglessness of life.
3. Despite the often chaotic conditions of human life, I believe there is an order and pattern to existence that someday we will come to understand.

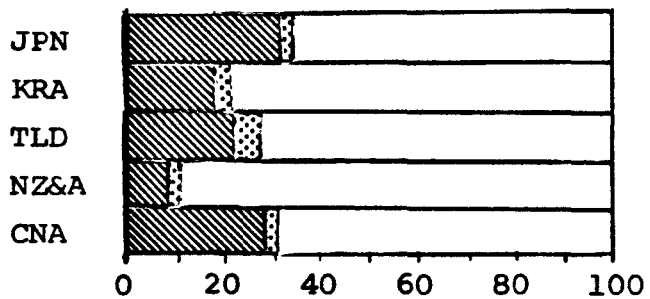
¹For full scores, see Appendix C.

FIGURE 6.1 Responses to the Statements Concerning Meaning (in percent)

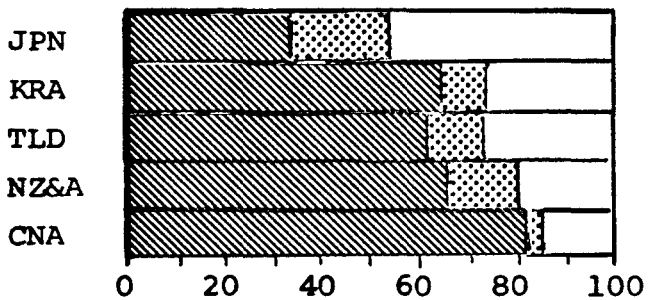
1. I often wonder what life is all about.



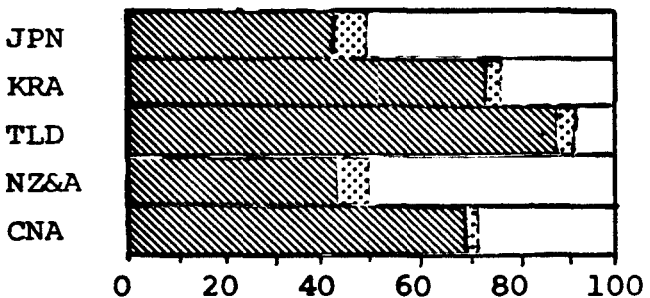
2. I am not very interested in discussion of the question of the meaning or meaninglessness of life.



3. Despite the often chaotic conditions of human life, I believe there is an order and pattern to existence that someday we will come to understand.



4. Although mankind understands the world around him better, the basic meaning of life is beyond our understanding.



Legend: JPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

Agree Uncertain Disagree

4. Although mankind understands the world around him better, the meaning of life is beyond our understanding.

Figure 6.1 clearly shows that, without exception, the overwhelming majority in each sample--89 percent in the Japanese, 87 percent in the Korean, 86 percent in the Thai, 80 percent in the New Zealand-Australian, and 86 percent in the Chinese sample--reported that they often wondered what life is all about. This unanimity may reflect the commonly observed preoccupation with self-identity problems during adolescence.

Although a majority in each sample said they were interested in the discussion about the meaning of life, the Asians were less interested in discussing it than the New Zealand-Australian students. Thus, 67 percent of the Japanese, 78 percent of the Korean, 72 percent of the Thai, and 68 percent of the Chinese reported interest in contrast to 89 percent of the New Zealand-Australians. This may indicate the common tendency among the Orientals not to discuss matters referring to religion with others.

When asked if there is some order behind the seemingly chaotic conditions of human life, an interesting picture appeared. While only 36 percent of the Japanese believed there is such an order, 83 percent of the Chinese gave affirmative answers. Between these extremes were the

Korean, the Thai, and New Zealand-Australian groups. It may be hard to square the Japanese failure to see some order in life with their well-known belief in-fate, but logic plays very little role in existential matters among the Japanese (Lebra, 1976:165-166; Ishida, 1974:117-119; Nakamura, 1968: 531-576; Basabe, 1972:3-6, 85-92; Basabe et al., 1968:32-36; Offner and Van Straelen, 1963:11-15). For instance, speaking of the doctrinal inconsistencies of the "New Religions" in Japan, Offner and Van Straelen, (1963:14) remarked that

Intellectual somersaults are so frequent that it would be a colossal task to bring about some kind of unity. We stand here vis-a-vis the inscrutable ways of men who talk about a "practical truth" which is not true in fact, who reason with their feelings, who have a distinct dislike of clear logic, and who deny the undeniable principle of contradiction.

That the high proportion of the Chinese students agreed that there is a pattern and order behind the world of appearances is clearly in line with the traditional belief in the "gestalt cosmology" (Thompson, 1975:3-11), the Chinese sense of the wholeness of the universe in which man is only a part, the sense that characterizes the Chinese philosophical writings, poetry, and landscape paintings.

As to whether the meaning of life is beyond human understanding, again extremes emerged. At one end were 91 percent of the Thai saying the meaning of life is beyond

human understanding, at the other end only 44 percent of the Japanese and 46 percent of the New Zealand-Australian students gave this answer; with the Korean and the Chinese students in the middle.

It is very difficult to account for such glaring differences in the students' responses to the statement on the incomprehensibility of the meaning of life, since the meaning of life as such is difficult to define and it may mean different things to different people. Stem (1971: 1-15) distinguishes three kinds of answers to the question of the meaning of life: theological, metaphysical, and critical. The theological answer presupposes that God created man for a certain purpose and the meaning of human life is to fulfill this divine purpose for man. The metaphysical answer does not presume a purpose of a personal God, but it does postulate a definite purpose that is inherent in nature or some other absolute force. Life is meaningful to the extent to which man fulfills the purpose of this metaphysical entity. Finally, the critical answer does not assume any objective meaning written in human life, things, or events. Meaning means always a meaning to someone thus relative. It is man himself who gives meaning to his existence by creating a life-guiding project such as self-improvement, altruistic endeavor, search for power, wealth, and happiness, scientific pursuit, establishing

justice, etc.. The theological and metaphysical purposes are empirically inaccessible, but the critical meaning, being created by an act of human will, can be scientifically verified and thus understandable.

The phrase "the meaning of life" in the above statement seems to suggest some objective meaning, but it is difficult to establish from the data whether the respondents understood it as such. If the students do not believe in an objective order in the universe whatsoever, it is illogical to expect them all to think about some objective meaning independent of human beings when responding to the above statement. Even if the students do believe in an objective order in human existence, it is conceivable that, when confronted with the question whether the meaning of life is beyond human understanding, they might still have thought of the various man-created meanings of life instead of some purposes predestined by God or other metaphysical entities. It also may very well be that some students gave to this apparently philosophical question a theological answer, that is, an answer according to their religious faith. Because of these various possibilities, it seems futile to try to explain the differences in the responses to this statement among the various national groups.

The above findings suggest that, like students from other national groups, most Chinese often wonder what life

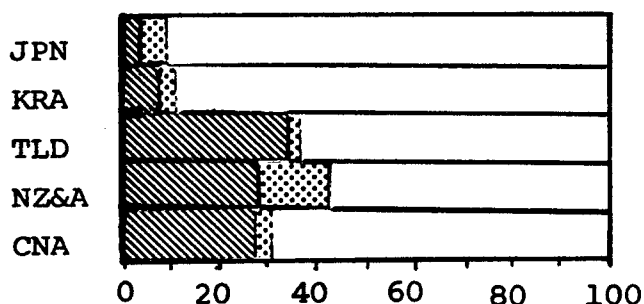
is all about. Like their Asian counterparts, the Chinese students are less inclined than the New Zealand-Australians to talk about matters related to the problem of the meaning of life with others. Of all the students, the Chinese are by far the most likely to agree that there is, despite the apparent disorder and confusion, some order in the universe. Finally, similar to the Koreans, the Chinese students are more likely than the Japanese and the New Zealand-Australian, but less likely than the Thai students, to believe that the meaning of life is beyond our human comprehension.

The Problem of Suffering

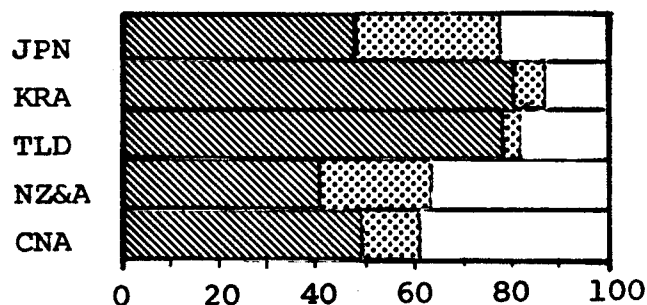
What Yinger was interested in the students' attitudes toward the problem of suffering was how they assessed the amount of the suffering, in whatever disguise, in the world; whether they believed that the amount of suffering could be reduced in the long run; and whether they considered it as a crucial task for mankind to seek all possible means to reduce suffering. The implications of these questions on his thesis, that suffering is part of the substructure of religion, are evident. If suffering has been reduced and is likely to be reduced further, one day it may as the conventional wisdom (Greeley, 1972) claims it will, be reduced to a level of insignificance, if not completely eliminated. Then, either religion will no longer be necessary (which invalidates the assumption that religion is universal

FIGURE 6.2 Responses to the Statements Concerning Suffering (in percent)

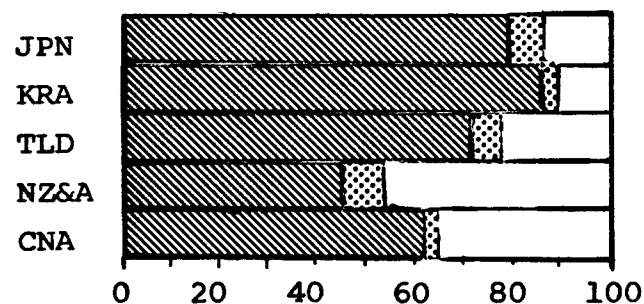
1. In recent generations, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of human suffering.



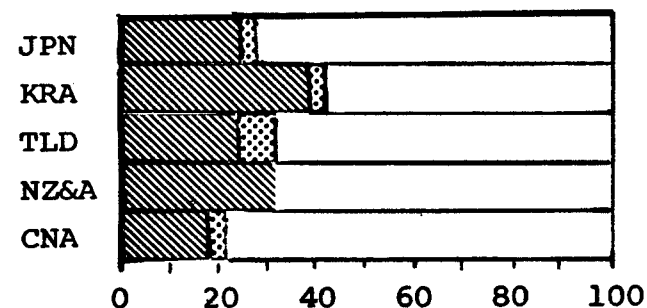
2. In recent generations, suffering has increased in the world.



3. The types of human suffering may have changed, and may continue to change, but mankind is not likely to reduce the extent of suffering.



4. It is a mistake to believe that the reduction of suffering on earth is the critically important question for mankind.



Legend: JPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

Agree Uncertain Disagree

as language is universal), or suffering cannot be considered as part of the substructure of religion. Furthermore, if reducing suffering is not considered critically important, suffering does not constitute a serious problem. Then, either the concept of religion as a residual means to cope with problems which cannot be dealt with otherwise must be changed, or suffering cannot be seen as one of the parameters of the substructure of religion. To tap the respondents' feelings about the aforementioned dimensions of the problem of suffering, Yinger again constructed four statements:

1. In recent generations, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of human suffering.
2. In recent generations, suffering has increased in the world.
3. The types of human suffering may have changed, and continue to change, but mankind is unlikely to reduce the extent of suffering.
4. It is a mistake to believe that the reduction of suffering on earth is the critically important question for mankind.

Figure 6.2 shows that an overwhelming majority of the Japanese and Koreans, and a large majority of the Thai, New Zealand-Australian, and Chinese did not believe that the extent of suffering has been significantly reduced in recent generations, although they believed the types of suffering may have changed.

Did they then agree that suffering has increased

in the world? While an overwhelming majority of the Korean and Thai students believed so, only less than half of the Japanese, New Zealand-Australian, and Chinese respondents gave an affirmative answer. It is apparently difficult to expect students from well-to-do or rapidly developing countries like Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and Taiwan to accept the idea that suffering has been increased in the world, even they agreed that suffering in the world has not been significantly reduced in the past few decades. The low correlation between the responses to the negatively phrased statement and those to the positively phrased statements may seem puzzling. Yet, it is reasonable to assume that it was more due to the particular wording of the statements rather than the unreliability of the students' responses, though this can never be completely ruled out. To say suffering has been reduced--let alone say suffering has been significantly reduced--is one thing, to say suffering has increased is quite another. It should be noted that among all the national students, the Japanese and the New Zealand-Australian groups have a remarkably large proportion who were uncertain that, in recent generations, suffering has increased in the world.

When asked whether the extent of suffering in the world is likely to be reduced, students from countries with low population density, abundant resources, and many

developing possibilities tend to find it harder to imagine that the amount of suffering cannot be reduced. Thus, only 47 percent of the New Zealand-Australian students compared with 87 percent of the Korean, 80 percent of the Japanese, 72 percent of the Thai, and 62 percent of the Chinese aver that the types of suffering do change, but the extent of suffering is unlikely to be reduced. It is significant to note that the Japanese students were apparently aware that technological advancement may change the types of suffering, but is unable to reduce the extent of suffering in the world.

Despite this prevalent unpromising outlook, the great majority in most samples are convinced that reduction of suffering on earth is of crucial importance for mankind: 73 percent for the Japanese, 58 percent for the Korean, 68 percent for the Thai and the New Zealand-Australian, and 76 percent for the Chinese. It is noticeable that, compared with the students from other nations, the Koreans were a little more pessimistic and resigned. This tendency will show up again in the pages that follow.

The preceding findings indicate that like students in other national groups, a good majority of the Chinese students disagreed that suffering in the world has been significantly reduced. As the students from societies with high standards of living, Japan, New Zealand and Australia,

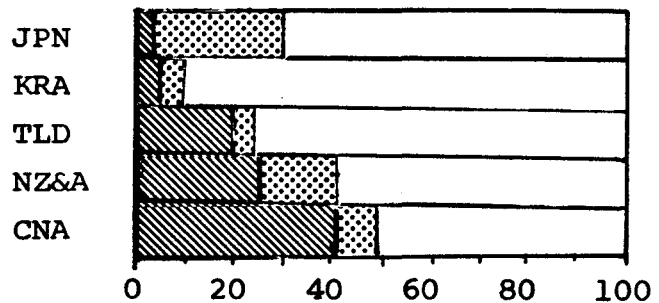
the Chinese were less inclined to agree that suffering has increased in recent generations than the students from Korea and Thailand. In contrast to the New Zealand-Australian respondents, the Chinese, along with most other Asian students, tended to be more convinced that suffering in the world is unlikely to be reduced. Yet, more than any other group, they maintained that it is crucially important for mankind to fight against suffering.

The Problem of Injustice

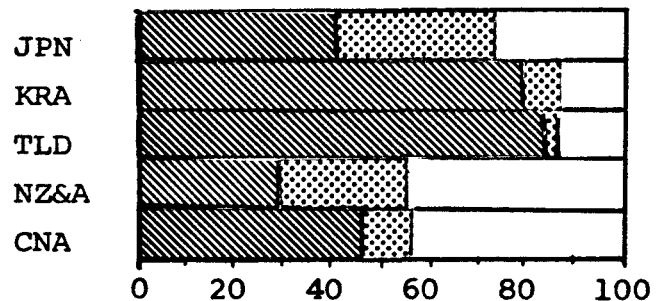
What Yinger wanted to know about the students' attitudes toward the problem of injustice was similar to that sought concerning the problem of suffering, and also for similar reasons. To what extent do the students believe that injustice in the world has been reduced? Or do they think it has been increased? To what degree would they agree that the amount of injustice remains constant in the world? Are they convinced that it is vital for mankind to seek all means to reduce injustice? The reasons are clear. Religion is viewed by Yinger as a final means to deal with enduring problems when man reaches the limit of his empirical capacity and is assumed to be a pan-human phenomenon. Injustice is seen as one of these problems, and together with meaninglessness and suffering, it constitutes the substructure of religion. Thus, if the amount of injustice is thought of as reducible, it may one day

FIGURE 6.3 Responses to the Statements Concerning Injustice (in percent)

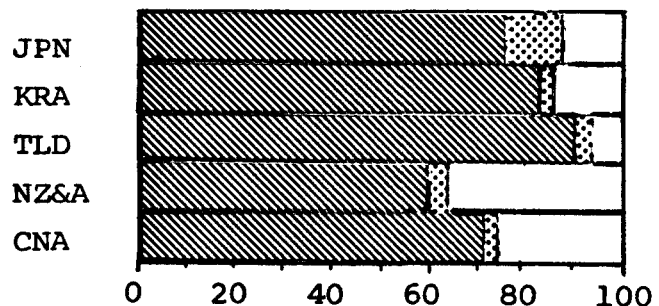
1. In recent generations, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of injustice in human life.



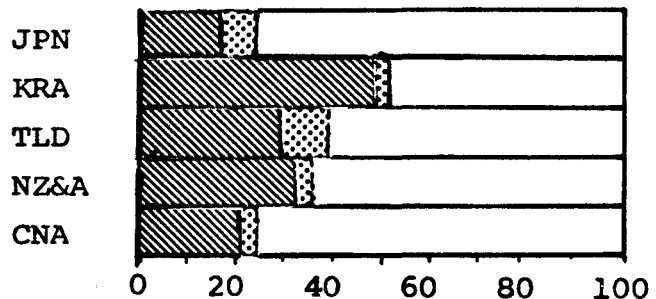
2. In recent generations, injustice has increased in the world.



3. The types of injustice may have changed, and may continue to change, but mankind is not likely to reduce the extent of injustice.



4. It is a mistake to believe that the reduction of injustice on earth is the critically important question for mankind.



Legend: JPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

Agree Uncertain Disagree

be reduced to such an extent that it no longer poses any threat to man; or if it remains rampant, men may not consider it a pressing problem. In either case, injustice cannot be regarded as one of the roots of religion. To gauge students' attitudes toward these aspects of the problem of injustice, Yinger designed four statements similar in format to those on the problem of suffering.

1. In recent generations, there has been a significant reduction of injustice in human life.
2. In recent generations, injustice has increased in the world.
3. The types of injustice may have changed, and may continue to change, but mankind is unlikely to reduce the extent of injustice.
4. It is a mistake to believe that the reduction of injustice on earth is the critically important question for mankind.

It becomes quite clear, as indicated in Figure 6.3, that the patterns of the responses to these four statements much resemble those to the statements about the problem of suffering. An overwhelming to a small majority disagreed that, in recent generations, injustice has significantly been reduced in the world; 90 percent for the Koreans, 76 percent for the Thai, 71 percent for the Japanese, 59 percent for the New Zealand-Australians, and 54 percent for the Chinese. It seems much more difficult for students like the Koreans and Thai, who had been living under an absolute dictatorship or an arbitrary military rule, to perceive a

world in which injustice has been decreased than those living in democratic or semi-democratic societies. (We will have more to say about this topic later.)

There are remarkable variations among those believing there has been an increase in injustice in the world: 84 percent of the Thai and 79 percent of the Korean students at one extreme, and only 30 percent of the New Zealand-Australian at the other; in between are the Japanese with 41 percent and the Chinese with 47 percent. Again, the relatively large percentage of the Japanese and the New Zealand-Australian students reporting uncertain, 31 and 26 percent respectively, should be pointed out. This suggests that it is easier for the students from dictatorial societies to perceive a world with increasing injustice than those from more equalitarian countries. It is evidently for the same reason as mentioned above in our analysis of the responses to the statements on suffering that a low correlation between the responses to the positively worded statement and those to the negatively worded one appears to say injustice has not been significantly reduced does not imply that injustice has increased.

As to whether mankind is unlikely to reduce injustice, 91 percent of the Thai, 83 percent of the Korean, 78 percent of the Japanese, 71 percent of the Chinese, and 58 percent of the New Zealand-Australian students gave affirmative

answers. As in their attitude toward suffering, here again, the contrast between the New Zealand-Australian and the Thai and the Korean students is evident. Its intractability notwithstanding, except for the Korean students, the majority of the students disagree that reduction of injustice on earth is not a crucially important task for mankind. Seventy-seven percent among the Japanese, 61 percent among the Thai, 64 percent among the New Zealand-Australian, and 76 percent among the Chinese as compared to only 49 percent among the Korean students. Continuing frustration in protesting against an uncompromising dictatorship made the Korean students easily feel the futility of fighting against injustice.

The foregoing analysis reveals that the Chinese were less likely than students from any other group to disagree that injustice has been significantly reduced in recent generations. This tendency becomes even more evident when we look at the figures on the positive side: 41 percent of the Chinese compared with 24 percent of the New Zealand-Australian, 18 percent of the Thai, and only 4 percent of the Japanese and Korean agreed that injustice has been significantly decreased in recent generations. This probably reflects the consequences of many democratic programs taking place in Taiwan such as the implementation of Sun Yat-sen's San Min Chu I (Nationalism, Democracy, and

People's Livelihood), land reform, increasing active political participation and representation by civilians, efforts to bring Taiwanese into positions in the national government, etc. (Walker, 1973:359-396; Kuo, 1973:397-433). Similar to the Japanese, the Chinese are much less inclined than the Korean and the Thai, but more ready than the New Zealand-Australian, to agree that injustice has been increased in the world.

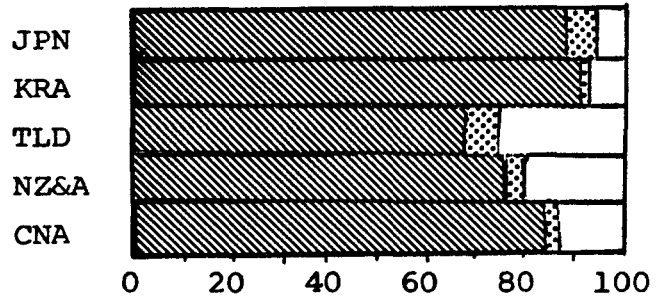
Like students from other samples, most Chinese believed that injustice is unlikely to be reduced, yet, again like the students in all but the Korean groups, the majority of the Chinese rejected the idea that it is a mistake to believe that reduction of injustice is vitally important for mankind.

The Function of Religion

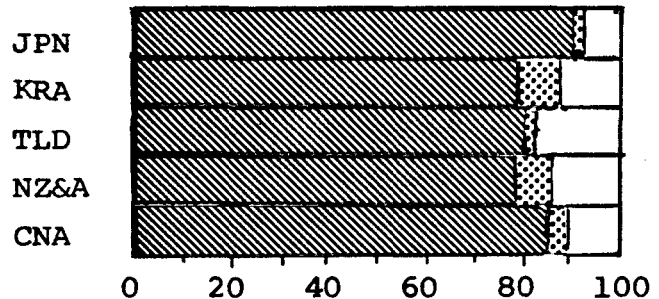
Religion is seen by Yinger as man's effort to gain composure and serenity in the face of the crushing impact of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. "It is man's refusal to capitulate to death, to give up in the face of frustration, to allow hostility to tear apart human associations" (Yinger, 1970:7). "Religion is an effort to establish a final justice, to conquer perpetual suffering, to solve the eternal mysteries, or at least to give meaning to them" (Yinger, 1970:80). It is man's effort "to make virtue of our ultimate necessities" (Yinger,

FIGURE 6.4 Responses to the Statements Concerning Religion
(in percent)

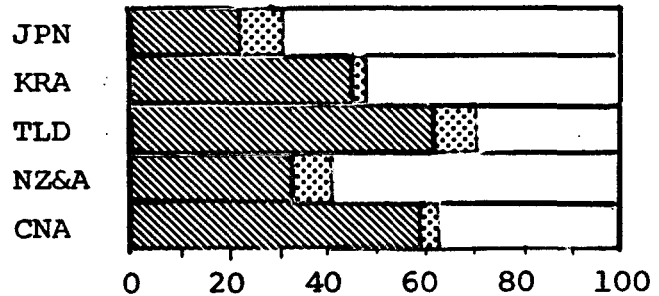
1. Mankind's most difficult and destructive experiences are often the source of increased understanding and powers of endurance.



2. Suffering, injustice, and finally death need not be negative experiences; their significance can be shaped by our beliefs.



3. In the long run, undeserving persons often seem to be the ones who win the most advantages.



4. in face of the almost continuous conflict and violence in life, I cannot see how men are going to learn to live in mutual respect and peace with one another.

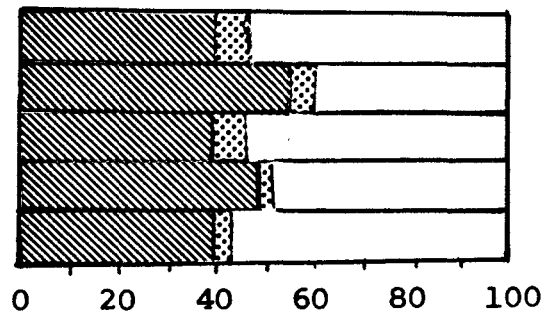
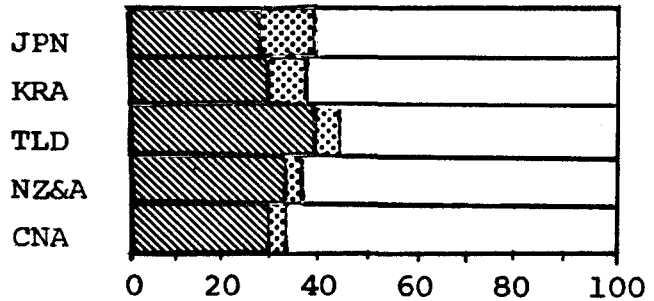
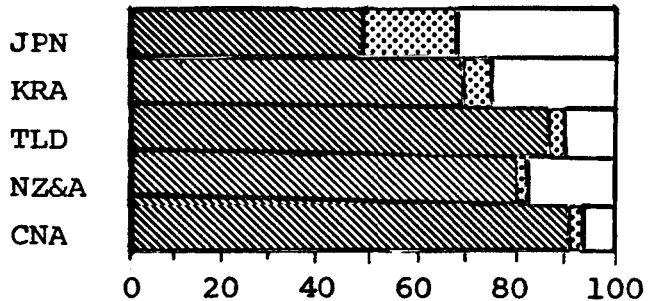


FIGURE 6.4 (cont.)

5. Efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems by religious means seem to me to be a waste of time and resources.



6. There are many aspects of the beliefs and practices of the world's religions with which I might not agree; nevertheless I consider them to be valuable efforts to deal with man's most important questions.



Legend: JPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

Agree Uncertain Disagree

1970:10). To assess the respondents' attitudes toward this function of religion, Yinger designed six statements. The first four deal with the function of religion as such, and the last two with the evaluation of the traditional world religions. In the first four statements Yinger sought to determine whether the students see some positive value in man's devastating experiences rather than yielding to them; whether they believe in a final justice in the presence of the frequent apparently unjust experiences; whether they are convinced that men can manage to coexist peacefully despite ever-present hostility; and whether they agree that man can remove or at least reduce the sting of suffering and death by reinterpreting them and giving them some significance. In the last two statements, he was concerned with whether the students regard the efforts of the conventional religions in dealing with man's most difficult problems as worthwhile. The six statements are presented as follows:

1. Mankind's most difficult and destructive experiences are often sources of increased understanding and powers of endurance.
2. Suffering, injustice, and finally death need not be negative experiences; their significance can be shaped by our beliefs.
3. In the long run, undeserving persons often seem to be the ones who win the most advantages.
4. In the face of the almost continuous conflict and violence, I cannot see how men are going to learn

- to live in mutual respect and peace with one another.
5. Efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems by religious means seem to me to be a waste of time and resources.
 6. There are many aspects of the beliefs and practices of the world's religions with which I might not agree; nevertheless, I consider them to be valuable efforts to deal with man's important questions.

Figure 6.4 shows that an overwhelming majority of the students agreed that ravaging and wrenching experiences can be sources of endurance and understanding. Equally, without exception, an overwhelming majority in all national groups believed that suffering, injustice, and even death can be reinterpreted and thus given significance by man.

When asked whether in the long run, undeserving persons often win most of the advantages in life, a very interesting picture appeared. Except for the Korean students who were close to evenly split on this question (46 percent agreed versus 52 percent disagreeing), the responses in other groups varied considerably. Thus, while 69 percent of the Japanese and 58 percent of the New Zealand-Australian respondents did not endorse the belief that underserving persons often, in the long run, win most of the advantages, only 29 percent of the Thai, and 37 percent of the Chinese disfavored such an idea. Given the Christian belief in a just God, it is not surprising that nearly two out of three among the New Zealand-Austra-

lian disagreed, but it is extremely puzzling why among the Thai respondents, for whom "merit-making" constitutes "the sum and substance of their faith and worship" (Kirsch, 1975:183), not even one third disapproved since the concept of "merit-making" presupposes the belief of a final justice. However, judging from the huge percentage among the Thai (84 percent), believing in increased injustice in the world and from the diminishing importance of the traditional religious beliefs among the modern Thai intelligentsia (Blanchard, 1958:116-117), it may well be that the students answered this question based on their daily experiences rather than their religious beliefs. It may also seem surprising that, while only about one third of the Japanese believed in some order or pattern behind the world of appearances, more than two thirds of them declined to accept the often observed phenomenon that undeserving people often seem to get most of the advantages in life. With the Chinese, the puzzle is just the other way around. Most of them believed in an order in the world; yet relatively few of them disagreed that underserving people often get the best of life. Since belief in final justice presumes a personal entity, and since the order in question could be understood either as divine or blind metaphysical, a belief in some order or pattern behind daily appearances does not have to be

related to the idea of the final justice. Basabe et al., (1968:32-36) took pains to point out that "the typical Japanese feels an aversion for ratiocination, for any discourse or debate of a strictly logical nature, when it comes to the field of religion." "Western logic and traditional conceptual phraseology mean very little to the Japanese soul." "The doctrinal contents of his religions are overwhelmingly vague and confusing . . . and he remains undisturbed by whatever contradiction results." It is perhaps, just such contradictions that he feels are more conducive to perceiving the depth of the mysteries of the gods and nature. Thus, it could very well be that even those Japanese who did not believe in an order designed by a diving Deity were not disturbed by admitting that there is a final justice. The non-logical character of verbal expression and thought of the Chinese is also well known (see, for instance, Nakamura, 1968:185-195). This unawareness of logical contradiction in religious matters might also be applicable to the Chinese, but the other way around: They may believe in a divine order in the universe, yet feel unalarmed by denying the existence of the final justice. Most educated Chinese, however, do not believe in a divine order as noted above.

As to the statement, that because of the consistent violence and conflict, it is impossible to see how

man can live together with peace and respect, the percentage denying this idea was 54 percent among the Japanese, 55 percent among the Thai, 58 percent among the Chinese compared with 48 among the New Zealand-Australian and only 40 percent among the Korean students. In contrast to students from other national groups, the Koreans here again were a little bit pessimistic.

Toward the function of the traditional world religions, the students in general showed rather favorable attitudes. A majority of all student groups denied that efforts to deal with man's most difficult questions by religious means are a waste of time and resources. Except for the Japanese, a large to overwhelming majority of the students believed that religious efforts in coping with man's basic problems are valuable; 69 percent for the Korean, 86 percent for the Thai, 80 percent for the New Zealand-Australian, and 92 percent for the Chinese in contrast to only 50 percent for the Japanese. It is noteworthy that the percentage of uncertain responses to both statements was the highest among the Japanese, 11 percent to the first statement, 18 percent to the second. The findings on the Japanese students' attitudes toward the function of the world's religion discovered in this study is, broadly speaking, in accord with Basabe's finding (1968:96-97) in his nationwide

study on Japanese college students' attitudes toward religion. He found that between 55 to 65 percent of the male students recognized some positive values, and only between 15 to 25 percent showed open hostility or utter disdain toward religion.

Considering the general negative attitudes toward conventional Chinese religions among the intellectuals in Taiwan, as mentioned above, and the large percentage of the Chinese students unaffiliated with any religion, it seems striking to find that both the proportion denying that religious efforts in coping with human problems are a waste, and the proportion perceiving positive values in world religions are the largest among all student groups. Probably, this is, in part at least, due to the fact that these students, enrolled in Fu-Jen, a well-known Catholic university, may have restrained themselves from voicing opinions unfavorable to religion. It is also possible that the students, in their response to these statements, separated religion as practiced by the masses from the well-known world religions and took notice of the efforts displayed by several world religions, including Buddhism, in relieving suffering and injustice around the world.

Clark (1932:6-7) believed that the Korean soul seemed to exhibit "a distinctive 'flair' for things religious." But respect for the world religions among the

Korean students could probably be explained by the unusual influences exercised by the Christian religion in shaping modern Korea. "Although Korea did not become a Christian nation, it has been a nation where the leadership and ideals have, in modern times, been drawn to a large extent from Christian sources" (Korean Overseas Information Service, 1978:206). Indeed, Christian missionaries, especially those of the Protestant persuasion, both arranged advanced studies for many potential leaders abroad and directly or indirectly provided assistance to the Korean resistance and independence movements. As Vreeland et al., (1975:102-105) point out, it was the Christian missionaries and schools that were the first to introduce Western concepts of science, democracy, and individualism, and thus became instrumental in shaping social values and social organizations in modern Korea. Kim (1974) even argued that, as in Europe, the Protestant Ethic made the old Korea's break through into modernity possible. Ishida (1974:101) maintained that

Christianity seems penetrated very deeply as far as the Korean peninsula. Perhaps this reflects, in part, the Korean peoples' search for consolation in a worldwide religion during their colonial period under the oppressive Japanese rule. It may also reflect the fundamental and distinctive nature of their culture, namely, there may be a stronger basis there than in Japan for the reception of a religion as Christianity.

Scalpino (1970:118) contended that "for the modern Korean,

Christianity became a method of expressing political as well as religious sentiments--a source of nationalist identification against Chinese and Chinese threats."

Since Confucianism is for the majority of the Koreans a way of life, providing ethical standards in family and social relationships, as an imported religion, Christianity may be an important source of the Korean students' respect for world religions.

Judging from the above findings, most of the Chinese students, like most of the students from other national groups, endorsed the statement that difficult experiences can often be a source of endurance and understanding; and suffering, injustice, and death can be given significance by human faith. Like the Thai, the Chinese students are far less ready to deny that undeserving persons seem often to win most of the advantages in life than the Japanese, Korean, and the New Zealand-Australian students. Compared with the Korean and the New Zealand-Australian students, the Chinese, like the Japanese and Thai students, are somewhat more likely to disagree that men are unable to live peacefully with each other in face of the constant conflict and violence. Of all the student groups, the Chinese were most inclined to reject the contention that religion is a waste of time and resources and to acknowledge the positive values in

world religions.

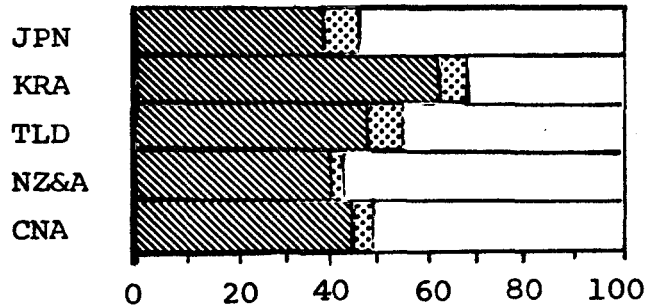
The Function of Politics

The raison d'etre of religion, according to Yinger, is the ultimate and enduring nature of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice which man is unable to cope with using other means. It is this particular characteristic of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice that qualifies them to be conceived as the substructure of religion. Politics has been defined as being concerned with "who gets what, when and how" (Lasswell, 1936), and it is the most powerful secular means which has been used to reduce but also to inflict suffering, to establish justice but also to maintain injustice. Why Yinger was interested in the function of politics in reducing suffering and injustice is also clear. If the respondents believe suffering and injustice can be significantly reduced or eliminated, suffering and injustice cannot be seen as the essential parts of the substructure of religion. To probe the students' attitudes toward the function of politics as such and its ability in reducing or modifying the ultimate and enduring quality of suffering and injustice, Yinger devised the following statements:

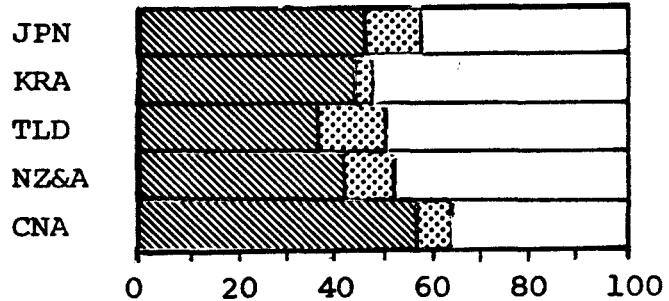
1. Efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems by political means seem to me to be a waste of time and resources.

FIGURE 6.5 Responses to the Statements Concerning Politics
(in percent)

1. Efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems by political means seem to me to be a waste of time and resources.



2. In the long run, mankind will be able to reduce injustice and suffering by wise political action.



Legend: JPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

Agree Uncertain Disagree

2. In the long run, mankind will be able to reduce injustice and suffering by wise political action.

Figure 6.5 shows immediately that the differences between the positive and the negative responses to these two statements are much less drastic than the differences between the responses to the previous statements, that is, the frequency distribution are less skewed. Thus, except for the Korean case, where one third (32 percent) disagreed that political efforts in reducing suffering and injustice are a waste of time and resources, roughly one half among other student groups opposed such an assertion. Evident again is the Korean students' pessimism and their distrust of the government, clearly reflecting the deeply felt frustration in their renewed protest against a dictatorial political system in their own country. This may suggest that in the minds of the students politics appears to be a strong competitor with religion in reducing suffering and injustice; yet, as will be seen shortly, this has, in general, not diminished their appreciation of religion's efforts to cope with these problems.

To the statement that in the long run suffering and injustice can be reduced by political actions, 52 percent of the Korean and 50 percent of the Thai, 43 percent of the Japanese, 47 percent of the New Zealand-Australian students gave a negative answer in contrast to

only 37 percent of the Chinese. The greater trust in political efforts among the Chinese students (57 percent agreed with the above statement, the largest of all) could very well be due to, as pointed out before, the successful implementation of San Min Chu I, the political dogmas of the founder of the Chinese Republic and a well organized political socialization program on Taiwan (Appleton, 1976).

These results suggest that the Chinese in general were favorably disposed toward political efforts. Along with the Japanese and the New Zealand-Australian students, they were more inclined to disagree that political efforts in dealing with suffering and injustice are a waste of time and resources than the Korean and Thai students. The Chinese were more likely than students from any other sample to agree that, in the long run, mankind will be able to reduce suffering and injustice by prudent political decisions.

Summary

Although we have found and tried to interpret many differences in the responses to the 20 Likert-type statements concerning the issues of meaning, suffering, and injustice as well as the function of religion and politics among the students from the five national groups, the differences were, in most of the crucial questions, not substantial; nor did the Chinese students differ appreci-

ably from the students of other national groups on most of the important issues.

The other significant finding from the responses to the Likert-type statements is that, when the students were directly confronted with the questions of meaning, suffering, and injustice, the majority of them (1) showed great interest in these problems, (2) believed them to be fundamental and persistent, and (3) were convinced that man can cope with these problems by giving them meaning and significance. Hence, unlike the answers to the open-ended question, the responses to the Likert-type statements in all samples do lend support to the thesis that meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice constitute the substructure of religion as Yinger understands it.

CHAPTER VII

PERCEIVED AND EXPERIENCED EXTENT OF MEANINGLESSNESS, SUFFERING, AND INJUSTICE

Religion is seen by Yinger as man's attempt to "relativise" the menace of the fundamental problems of life by interpreting them as part of some larger good. By bringing them within the frame of an ultimate order that puts the problems into new perspectives, religion gives them meaning and significance (Yinger, 1969:91; 1977:15). Since religion is postulated as a universal phenomenon, according to this concept of religion, one would expect that most people would feel their lives as well as the lives of others as meaningful, even in face of the unremitting threat of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. To test this hypothesis, it is necessary to know both the respondents' perception of the degree of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice in the world, as well as their experience of the degree of these problems in their own lives. Yinger designed six items on a seven-point rating scale and asked the respondents to mark the point best expressing the degree of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice they perceived and experienced, as

shown below:

Compared with my ideal, with the situation I wish were true, I believe that in the world:

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | There is very little injustice | There is a great deal of injustice |
| | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | |
| 2. | There is very little suffering | There is a great deal of suffering |
| | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | |
| 3. | Life is meaningful for most people | Life is meaningless for most people |
| | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | |

Compared with most other people in your country, what has been your own personal experience?

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 4. | I have experienced very little injustice | I have experienced a great deal of injustice |
| | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | |
| 5. | I have experienced very little suffering | I have experienced a great deal of suffering |
| | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | |
| 6. | I have a strong sense of meaningfulness of life | I have a strong sense of meaninglessness of life |
| | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | |

The results are presented in Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1

Perceived Extent of Meaninglessness,
Suffering, and Injustice

Table 7.1 indicates that, compared with their ideal, the Japanese and New Zealand-Australian students saw more

TABLE 7.1 (cont.)

| Scale | | Nationality | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA | |
| Compared with most other people in your country, what has been your own personal experience? | | | | | | | |
| I have experienced very little injustice | I have experienced a great deal of injustice | Mean | 3.74 | 5.79 | 5.03 | 2.37 | 3.36 |
| | | Median | 3.69 | 5.99 | 5.32 | 2.05 | 3.28 |
| | | SD | 1.64 | 0.99 | 1.66 | 1.37 | 1.56 |
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>7</u> | |
| | | N ^b | 136 | 144 | 152 | 308 | 1000 |
| | | NR | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| I have experienced very little suffering | I have experienced a great deal of suffering | Mean | 3.99 | 5.42 | 5.30 | 2.37 | 3.36 |
| | | Median | 4.08 | 5.66 | 5.30 | 1.95 | 3.24 |
| | | SD | 1.54 | 1.30 | 1.58 | 1.53 | 1.59 |
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>7</u> | |
| | | N | 136 | 144 | 152 | 308 | 999 |
| | | NR | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| I have a strong sense of meaning- fulness of life | I have a strong sense of meaning- lessness of life | Mean | 2.50 | 3.58 | 2.76 | 2.78 | 2.35 |
| | | Median | 2.21 | 3.66 | 2.22 | 2.44 | 1.90 |
| | | SD | 1.40 | 1.88 | 1.80 | 1.47 | 1.54 |
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>7</u> | |
| | | N | 136 | 144 | 150 | 308 | 998 |
| | | NR | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 7 |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

^bN = Number of cases on which the statistics are calculated. NR = No response.

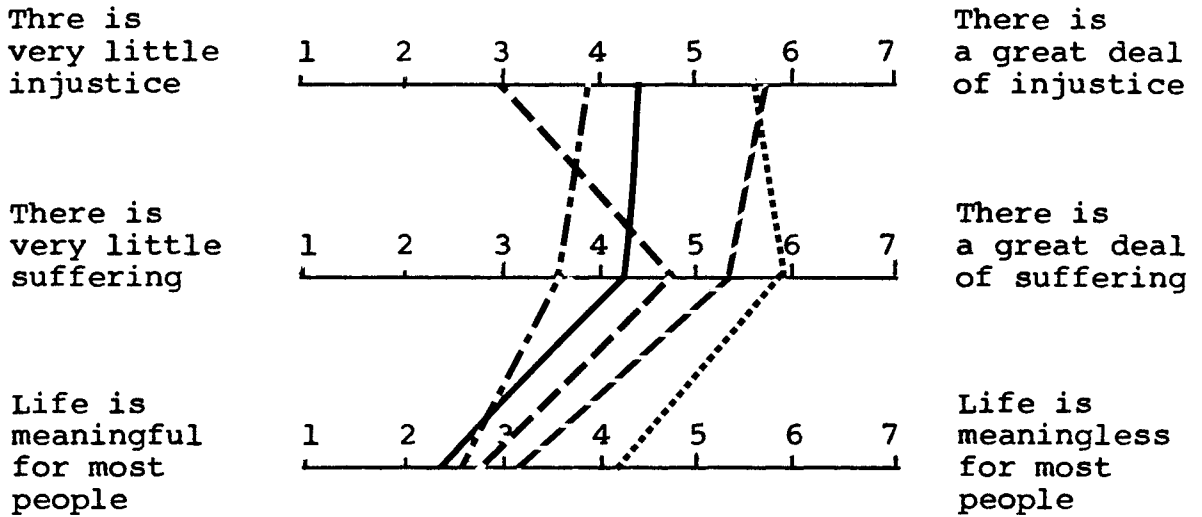
TABLE 7.1 Measures of Ideal and Personal Experience on the Scales of Injustice, Suffering, and Meaninglessness

(in percent)

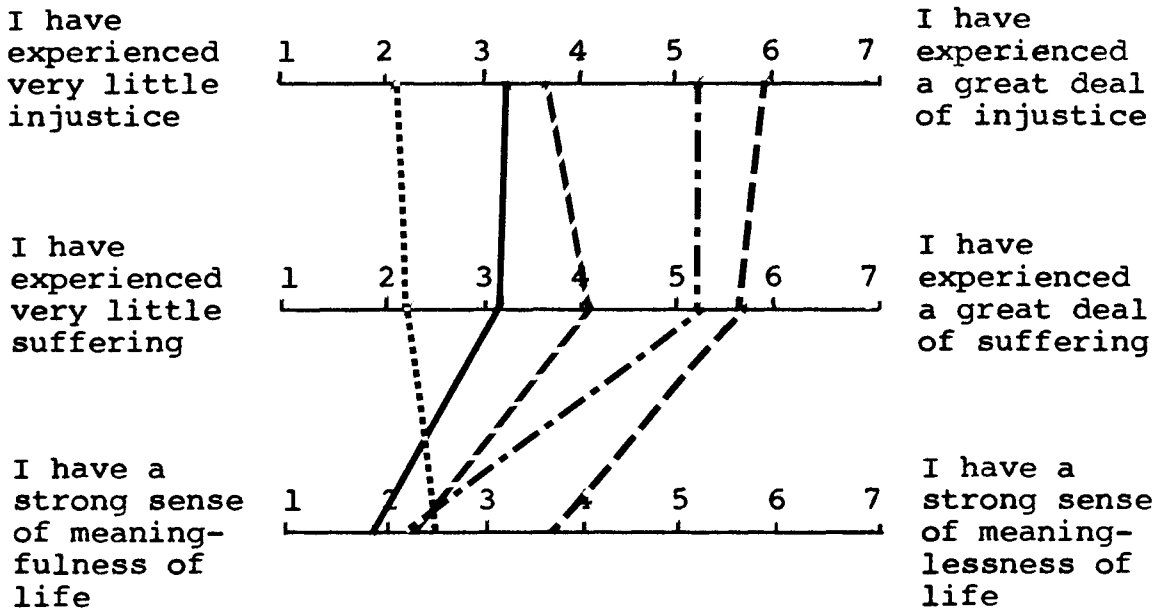
| Scale | | Nationality ^a | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA | |
| Compared with my ideal, with the situation I wish were true, I believe that in the world | | | | | | | |
| There is very little injustice | There is a great deal of injustice | Mean | 5.63 | 3.15 | 3.92 | 5.41 | 4.36 |
| | | Median | 5.71 | 3.08 | 3.90 | 5.64 | 4.42 |
| | | SD | 1.13 | 1.58 | 1.41 | 1.41 | 1.73 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | N | 135 | 138 | 151 | 306 | 1000 |
| | | NR | 3 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| There is very little suffering | There is a great deal of suffering | Mean | 5.32 | 4.44 | 3.50 | 5.72 | 4.40 |
| | | Median | 5.35 | 4.68 | 3.51 | 5.97 | 4.38 |
| | | SD | 1.22 | 1.62 | 1.62 | 1.35 | 1.65 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | N | 136 | 144 | 149 | 308 | 1002 |
| | | NR | 2 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Life is meaningful for most people | Life is meaningless for most people | Mean | 3.07 | 2.86 | 2.78 | 4.09 | 2.77 |
| | | Median | 3.10 | 2.68 | 2.52 | 4.15 | 2.35 |
| | | SD | 1.47 | 1.61 | 1.59 | 1.51 | 1.71 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | N | 136 | 144 | 151 | 306 | 1000 |
| | | NR | 2 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

FIGURE 7.1 Measures of Ideal and Personal Experience on the Scales of Injustice, Suffering, and Meaninglessness

Compared with my ideal, with the situation I wish were true, I believe that in the world



Compared with most other people in your country, What has been your personal experience?



Legend: ——— Japanese; - - - - Korean; - - - - Thai; New Zealander and Australian; ——— Chinese

injustice in the world, the Korean and Thai students perceived less, with the Chinese falling in between. This finding may suggest that students living in democratic and equalitarian societies were disposed to perceive more injustice in the world than those living under military or totalitarian control. This may be because they, enjoying freedom and democracy, tend to set a higher ideal for themselves than those living under suppression or regimentation.

The pattern of the students' perception on the suffering scale resembles the one on the injustice scale. The Japanese and New Zealand-Australian students perceived more suffering in the world than the Korean, the Thai, and the Chinese students. This may be due to the same psychological process as suggested above. The students from countries enjoying higher standards of living also tend to set a higher one for others.

When we look at the meaninglessness scale, again, it may be owing to the same psychological working that the Japanese and New Zealand students perceived more meaninglessness in the world than did the Korean, the Thai, and the Chinese.

It is significant to point out that, if we compare the students' ratings on the three scales, it is immediately evident, as Figure 7.1 graphically clearly displays,

that, despite students from affluent and democratic societies tended to see more injustice, suffering, and meaninglessness in the world than did students from poorer and totalitarian countries, all students perceived that life is meaningful in the world, even if it is beset with injustice and suffering. This may indicate their common conviction, albeit implicitly, that somehow man has the ability to make sense out of even a very difficult and unjust life.

These findings reveal that, compared with their ideal, the Chinese students tend to see less injustice in the world than the Japanese and New Zealand-Australian students, but more than the Korean and Thai respondents. They are inclined to perceive less suffering in the world than the Japanese, Korean, and New Zealand-Australian students, but more than the Thai. As to the question of meaning of life, the Chinese students are more likely to think life is meaningful for most people than any other national group.

Experienced Extent of Meaninglessness,
Suffering, and Injustice

Looking at the experience scales, Table 7.1, one finds that, compared with most other people in their respective countries, the Korean and the Thai students stated that they had suffered a great deal of injustice,

while the Japanese, the New Zealand-Australians, and the Chinese said they had experienced much less injustice, with the New Zealand-Australians reporting the least. Since the comparison is made between the respondents and their fellow citizens rather than people from other countries, it is difficult to interpret the findings without knowing exactly the life situations of the students; just knowing the general conditions of the respective nations is not enough. Yet, it could very well be that the Korean and the Thai students, who were more exposed to modern equalitarian concepts, were also more susceptible to the injustice that was taking place in their countries, and thus felt more acutely the impact of injustice than other mostly less educated fellow citizens.

An almost identical pattern of experience appeared on the suffering scale. Since the great majority of either the Korean or the Thai students are from white collar and small business families, such a high level of experienced suffering reported is puzzling, even granted that suffering may mean different things to different people. Since economical development in both countries started only in the 1960's, it may very well be that white collar jobs and even small businesses were, for many families of the students, just newly acquired upward occupations.

The scores on the experienced meaninglessness scale presents quite a different picture. Without exception, students from all national groups found their lives meaningful compared with the lives of their fellow citizens. The highest median score on the meaninglessness is 3.67 for the Korean, 2.4 for the New Zealand-Australian, 2.2 for the Japanese and the Thai, and 1.9 for the Chinese students. Since the phrase "a meaningful life" can mean different things to different people, it is difficult to interpret exactly why all the students found their lives more meaningful than most of their countrymen. Certainly it hardly suggests that these college students were more sophisticated in coping with the fundamental problems of life than most other people in their country. Barnhart (1977:184-196) indicated ten different ways in which men can find their lives meaningful. One of them is that one can find his life meaningful through anticipation of the fulfillment of strong expectations. It is probably just the anticipation that they would have a better life than others that made these potential elite of their country feel their lives were more meaningful than those of most other fellow citizens.

The above findings on the experienced injustice and suffering scales indicate that, when compared with most of their countrymen, the Chinese students tend to

say they have experienced less injustice and suffering than the Japanese, Korean, and Thai students, but more than the New Zealand-Australians. On the experienced meaningfulness scale, the Chinese are more likely than any other national group to report that they feel their lives are more meaningful when compared with most other people in their country.

Summary

The overall findings in the students' rating on the six seven-point rating scales of injustice, suffering, and meaningfulness unmistakably indicate that, despite the perception and experience of high levels of injustice and suffering, students from all national samples believe and feel that life is meaningful for themselves as well as for most other people. The phrase "a meaningful life" does not have to be a life lived according to an objective, divinely-given purpose. It can mean a great number of things. Often, as Barnhart (1977:195) noted, it just means "a happy life." At any rate, these findings do suggest that somehow men have managed to make some sense out of their lives, though fraught with injustice and suffering. Hence, although these findings do not directly bear out Yinger's thesis that meaningfulness, suffering, and injustice constitute the substructure of religion, they do provide strong evidence to the fact that, in the

face of severe injustice, suffering, and meaninglessness, most people refused to capitulate; instead, they have made efforts and somehow succeeded to cope with these problems. This is exactly what Yinger defined as religion; "the final word and the final action by which an individual or a society seeks to deal with the threat of suffering, meaninglessness, and injustice" (1977:68).

CHAPTER VIII

EFFECTS OF SOME BACKGROUND VARIABLES ON THE RESPONSES TO THE STATEMENTS CONCERNING MEANING, SUFFERING, INJUSTICE, RELIGION, AND POLITICS

Thus far we have been dealing with Yinger's concern about (1) whether the problems that the respondents perceived as fundamental and permanent for mankind are indeed variations of the three underlying archtypical themes of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice; (2) whether the respondents consider meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice as persistent and important problems, which though exceed man's empirical capacity, yet can be coped with by man's faith and action, and how, as a corollary, they assess the efforts of conventional religion and politics in dealing with these problems; (3) whether the respondents consider and have experienced that other people's lives, as well as their own, are meaningful, despite the continuing threat of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice.

In this chapter, we are interested in Yinger's effort to examine some sociological factors that may have effects on the individual respondent's attitudes reflected in his responses to the 20 Likert-type statements on the issues of meaning, suffering, injustice,

religion, and politics discussed above. What we want to determine is how much influence gender, father's occupation, personal religious affiliation, jointly and uniquely exert on individual student's responses to these statements, ignoring the relative importance of the component variables within these five background factors.

As Yinger (1977:78-79) pointed out that attitudes towards broad issues such as the meaning of life, suffering, and injustice are determined more by norms, values, and experiences shared by members of a nation than by those shared by members of gender, social class, educational level, and other social background. Besides, since religion is seen by Yinger as a universal phenomenon and the problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice as the fundamental and permanent problems of mankind, one would expect gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major not to have much effect on the students' responses to the statements concerning meaninglessness, suffering, injustice, and the related issues of the function of religion and politics, both on individual and national levels. Indeed, as will be seen, the influences these variables make on the students' attitudes are very small. It is because the effects are small that we will not seek to interpret them, for fear that any explanation we will give may be too farfetched or even

misleading.

As has been indicated before, out of Yinger's 20 statements we created five scales on meaning, suffering, injustice, religion and politics, and these were then regressed on the five background variables. The results are presented in Tables 8.1 through 8.5. The rows labeled "Total R^2 " show the values that represent the proportions of the total variance in the students' responses explained by gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major combined.

The values in the column under "First entry" are values obtained when the respective variables are entered first in the equation. They are the proportions of the total variance in the students' responses accounted for by a given variable without controlling all other variables. They are thus equivalent to the squared zero-order correlation (r^2) between the students' responses and that variable.

On the other hand, the values in the column under "Last entry" indicate values obtained when the respective variables are entered last in the equation. They are the proportions of the total variance in the students' responses explained by a given variable after all other variables have been taken into account. They thus represent the unique influence that a variable has on the students' re-

sponses independent of all other variables. With this in mind, we can proceed to analyze the overall and the relative effects of the five background variables on the students' responses to each of the five scales of meaning, suffering, injustice, religion, and politics.

The Effects of the Background Variables
on the Responses to the Meaning Statements

Inspection of the values in the row labeled "Total R^2 " in Table 8.1 shows that, in each national group, the proportion of variation in the students' responses to the meaning statements jointly explained by gender, father's occupation, religious affiliation, educational level, and major field is very small: .089 for the Japanese, .050 for the Koreans, .045 for the Thai, .063 for the New Zealand-Australians, and only .019 for the Chinese. Thus, knowledge of these five background variables of a student provides little information about (1) whether he often wonders about the meaning of life, (2) whether he is interested in discussing the meaning of life with others, (3) whether he thinks that there is some order behind the often apparently disorder in human experience, or (4) whether he considers that the meaning of life is beyond human understanding.

Comparing the figures in the two columns under the headings of "First entry" and "Last entry" across all sam-

TABLE 8.1 The Proportion of the Total Variance (R^2) in the Responses to the Statements Concerning Meaning Explained by Gender, Father's Occupation, Religion, Educational Level, and Academic Major

| Background Variable Entering Equation | Nationality | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | JPN | | KRA | | TLD | | NZ&A | | CNA | |
| | (n = 138) | | (n = 144) | | (n = 154) | | (n = 310) | | (n = 1005) | |
| | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | |
| | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry |
| Gender | .008 | .000 | .002 | .000 | .006 | .008 | .003 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Father's occupation | .005 | .014 | .007 | .006 | .000 | .004 | .003 | .000 | .002 | .002 |
| Religion | .033 | .035 | .012 | .008 | .028 | .034 | .028 | .026 | .008 | .008 |
| Educational level | .026 | .005 | .000 | .001 | .002 | .001 | .012 | .011 | .004 | .004 |
| Academic major | .034 | .017 | .031 | .028 | .002 | .002 | .024 | .018 | .005 | .004 |
| Total R^2 | .089 | | .050 | | .045 | | .063 | | .019 | |
| Number of cases | 133 | | 123 | | 131 | | 296 | | 951 | |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

ples, one finds that, in some cases, controlling all other variables makes no difference in the proportion of the variance uniquely explained by the variable involved, such as in the case of academic major in the Thai and gender in the Chinese samples. In other cases, this adjustment reduced, the proportion of variance explained by the variables involved. For instance, among the Japanese students, the variation accounted for by academic major dropped from .034 to .017, and among the Koreans it fell from .031 to .028. In still other cases, the proportion of variance independently explained was increased when all other variables had been taken into account. For example, the figure for the father's occupation rose from .005 to .014 in the Japanese sample, and for the Thai the value of religion jumped from .006 to .008. Although in some instances, these phenomena might be due to errors, as a whole they indicate that, when all other variables are not adjusted, the influences of some variables were inflated and those of others suppressed. They also suggest there were some correlations between some background variables, but the magnitude as well as the pattern of these correlations varied from sample to sample. Since these values are so trivial, however, we will not pursue these matters further in our analysis.

In all cases but one, religious affiliation played,

though with considerably varying degrees, the largest single role in explaining the differences among the students in their responses to the statements about the meaning of life. It uniquely accounted for .035 of the total .089 variance explained by all the five background variables for the Japanese, .034 of .045 for the Thai, .026 of .063 for the New Zealand-Australians, and .008 of .019 for the Chinese students. Among the Koreans, academic major was the most important factor, accounting for .028 of the total .050 explained variation. The variable that played the second largest role varied from sample to sample.

The least important factor for the Japanese, Korean, Thai, and New Zealand-Australian students was educational level; whereas, for the Chinese it was father's occupation. Father's occupation had no bearing among the New Zealand-Australian respondents, neither did gender among all student groups but Thai.

As the figures in Tables 8.1 through 8.5 show, even the second most important factors had values much smaller than those for the most important. Therefore, in the following analysis, we will focus our attention only on the combined effects and the largest unique effects of the five background variables on the students' responses to the statements regarding suffering, injustice, religion, and

politics.

The above findings suggest that the collective effects of gender, father's occupation, religious affiliation (or absence of it), educational level, and academic major on the students' responses to the statements about the meaning of life was the least among the Chinese. Religion had the strongest influence on the Chinese students' responses, but it had much less influence on the Chinese than on any other national group except the Koreans.

The Effects of the Background Variables
on the Responses to the Suffering Statements

Table 8.2 discloses that, for each student group, the overall variation in the students' responses to the statement concerning suffering that is explained by the five background variables was also very small. The largest value was .115 for the Japanese, followed by .068 for the Thai; the values for the Korean, New Zealand-Australian, and Chinese students were much smaller: only .029, .028, and .026 respectively. Thus, differences in gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major among the students did not make much difference in their responses to the questions of whether (1) in recent generations there has been a significant reduction in the amount of suffering in the world; (2) the amount of suffering has increased; (3) it is unlikely that

TABLE 8.2 The Proportion of the Total Variance (R^2) in the Responses to the Statements Concerning Suffering Explained by Gender, Father's Occupation, Religion Educational Level, and Academic Major

| Background Variable Entering Equation | Nationality ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | JPN | | KRA | | TLD | | NZ&A | | CNA | |
| | (n = 138) | | (n = 144) | | (n = 154) | | (n = 310) | | (n = 1005) | |
| | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | |
| | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry |
| Gender | .006 | .002 | .005 | .000 | .002 | .000 | .006 | .002 | .005 | .005 |
| Father's occupation | .028 | .018 | .000 | .002 | .003 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 |
| Religion | .010 | .004 | .016 | .013 | .009 | .009 | .004 | .002 | .004 | .005 |
| Educational level | .084 | .039 | .001 | .003 | .039 | .054 | .021 | .017 | .010 | .011 |
| Academic major | .045 | .006 | .009 | .007 | .002 | .015 | .002 | .001 | .006 | .005 |
| Total R^2 | .115 | | .029 | | .068 | | .028 | | .026 | |
| Number of cases | 133 | | 121 | | 129 | | 296 | | 954 | |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

mankind will be able to reduce the amount of suffering; and (4) it is crucially important for mankind to reduce suffering.

Table 8.2 also reveals that, except for the Korean students, the proportion of variance in the students' responses to the statements about suffering captured by educational level alone was the largest among all student groups. Thus, the variance explained by educational level was nearly one-third of the total explained variance for the Japanese, more than two-thirds of the total explained variance for the Thai. Although educational level had a much smaller value for the New Zealand-Australian and the Chinese students, it nevertheless contributed a little less than one-third of the total explained variance among the New Zealand-Australians and close to one-half among the Chinese. For the Koreans, religion was the most influential in explaining the students' responses to the suffering statements.

The preceding results indicate that the overall effects of the background factors on the students' responses to the statements referring to suffering are more than four times smaller for the Chinese than for the Japanese, nearly three times smaller than for the Thai, but almost the same as for the New Zealand-Australian and Korean students.

The Effects of the Background Variables
on the Responses to the Injustice Statements

Examination of Table 4.9 shows that gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major did not have much explanatory power for the students' responses to the statements concerning injustice either. Thus, again, knowledge of these background variables tell us little about (1) whether the students think that in recent generations the total amount of injustice in the world has been significantly reduced; (2) whether they feel it has been increased; (3) whether they believe that it is unlikely that mankind will be able to reduce the overall amount of injustice in the world; and (4) whether they consider it a vital task for mankind to reduce injustice.

Out of the five background variables, religion was the most powerful determinant of the students' responses to the injustice statements for the Korean and the Chinese students. For the Thai respondents, gender ranked first in influencing their responses; but among the New Zealand-Australian and the Japanese, academic major had the strongest impact on their attitudes toward the issues of injustice.

TABLE 8.3 The Proportion of the Total Variance (R^2) in the Responses to the Statements Concerning Injustice Explained by Gender, Father's Occupation, Religion, Educational Level, and Academic Major

| Background Variable Entering Equation | Nationality ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | JPN | | KRA | | TLD | | NZ&A | | CNA | |
| | (n = 138) | | (n = 144) | | (n = 154) | | (n = 310) | | (n = 1005) | |
| | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | |
| | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry |
| Gender | .004 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .045 | .033 | .001 | .002 | .000 | .000 |
| Father's occupation | .008 | .004 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .005 | .004 | .002 | .000 | .000 |
| Religion | .010 | .007 | .024 | .022 | .003 | .003 | .014 | .012 | .007 | .006 |
| Educational level | .031 | .006 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .003 | .001 | .000 | .000 |
| Academic major | .039 | .014 | .005 | .006 | .033 | .016 | .031 | .015 | .004 | .004 |
| Total R^2 | .057 | | .032 | | .070 | | .037 | | .010 | |
| Number of cases | 130 | | 123 | | 133 | | 293 | | 948 | |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

The Effects of the Background Variables
on the Responses to the Statements on Religion

What stands out in Table 8.4 is that in most cases gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major combined explained a relatively larger amount of variance in the students' responses to the statements related to religion than they did in the students' attitudes towards other issues. Yet, the actual value of the variance they explained was still very moderate. Thus, together these five background variables contributed only marginally to predicting a student's responses about (1) whether he believes that destructive experiences are often sources of endurance and understanding, (2) whether he agrees that man can reduce the threat of suffering, injustice, and even death by giving them some significance; (3) whether he thinks undeserving persons will indeed get most of the advantages in the long run, as it often appears to be the case; (4) whether he feels that men are able to manage to live together peacefully, in spite of the continuous hostility and violence, (5) whether he considers religious efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems as a waste of time and resources, or (6) whether he sees some positive values in religious endeavors in coping with man's fundamental questions.

As Table 8.4 shows, out of these five background

TABLE 8.4 The Proportion of the Total Variance (R^2) in the Responses to the Statements Concerning Religion Explained by Gender, Father's Occupation, Religion, Educational Level, and Academic Major

| Background Variable Entering Equation | Nationality ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | JPN | | KRA | | TLD | | NZ&A | | CNA | |
| | (n = 138) | | (n = 144) | | (n = 154) | | (n = 310) | | (n = 1005) | |
| | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | |
| | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry |
| Gender | .001 | .001 | .038 | .000 | .005 | .003 | .016 | .006 | .019 | .023 |
| Father's occupation | .001 | .002 | .011 | .003 | .011 | .015 | .000 | .000 | .003 | .001 |
| Religion | .084 | .068 | .020 | .020 | .008 | .007 | .130 | .123 | .006 | .007 |
| Educational level | .000 | .000 | .002 | .000 | .002 | .001 | .000 | .001 | .001 | .001 |
| Academic major | .044 | .027 | .076 | .030 | .013 | .012 | .010 | .010 | .002 | .008 |
| Total R^2 | .114 | | .097 | | .039 | | .147 | | .035 | |
| Number of cases | 129 | | 123 | | 131 | | 288 | | 942 | |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

variables, religion exerted the strongest influence on the Japanese and the New Zealand-Australian students' responses to the questions about religion. Its independent contribution to the explanation of the differences in the responses among the Japanese students was more than half of the combined influence of the five background variables, and among the New Zealand-Australians it was an overwhelming 84 percent of the total joint effect. Among the Koreans, academic major played the most important role; whereas for the Thai, father's occupation was most important, and for the Chinese, it was gender that had the strongest impact on the students' responses to statements about religion. The unique variance it explained contributed about two-thirds of the variance collectively accounted for by the five background variables.

The foregoing analysis indicates that gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major had very moderate correlation with the students' responses to the statements on religion, and the correlation was the weakest among the Chinese students. Gender made the single largest difference in determining the Chinese students' responses to the questions about religion, differentiating the Chinese group from any other national group for which gender played no or a very small part in influencing the students' answers to religious statements.

The Effects of the Background Variables
on the Responses to the Statements About Politics

Table 8.5 indicates that the magnitude of the total variance in the students' replies to the statements concerning politics explained by gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major varied less from sample to sample than it did in their responses to statements referring to other issues. These similar small values of the total-explained variance mean that the amount of information furnished by knowledge of these five background variables about a student's attitudes toward (1) whether political effort in reducing suffering and injustice is a waste of time and resources, or (2) whether political actions will be able to reduce the overall amount of suffering and injustice in the world is small across all national samples.

As for the individual impact of the five background factors, the differences between the values of the most important factors and those of the second and even the third most important factors are smaller than they were in previous instances. In addition, there were more variables which were suppressed by other variables, creating a situation where there are cases in which the sum of the unique variances explained by these five background variables exceeds the total explained variances. This was the case

TABLE 8.5 The Proportion of the Total Variance (R^2) in the Responses to the Statements Concerning Politics Explained by Gender, Father's Occupation, Religion, Educational Level, and Academic Major

| Background Variable Entering Equation | Nationality ^a | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | JPN | | KRA | | TLD | | NZ&A | | CNA | |
| | (n = 138) | | (n = 144) | | (n = 154) | | (n = 310) | | (n = 1005) | |
| | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | | R^2 | |
| | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry | First Entry | Last Entry |
| Gender | .001 | .000 | .001 | .001 | .001 | .004 | .013 | .011 | .004 | .006 |
| Father's occupation | .007 | .007 | .001 | .002 | .008 | .011 | .002 | .001 | .001 | .003 |
| Religion | .015 | .015 | .016 | .013 | .006 | .006 | .010 | .008 | .009 | .008 |
| Educational level | .000 | .006 | .029 | .030 | .011 | .015 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .007 |
| Academic major | .006 | .007 | .010 | .014 | .013 | .018 | .014 | .016 | .012 | .013 |
| Total R^2 | .033 | | .061 | | .047 | | .036 | | .029 | |
| Number of cases | 132 | | 124 | | 130 | | 297 | | 954 | |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

in the Japanese, Thai and Chinese samples. From among the five background variables, academic major was the primary determinant of the responses to the questions about politics among the Thai, New Zealand-Australian, and the Chinese students. Among the Japanese students, religion was the strongest predictor, whereas in the Korean sample, educational level contributed most in determining a student's responses.

Overall, the joint effect of gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major on the students' responses to the statements concerning politics was the least for the Chinese, but the difference was much smaller than for previous variables. Thus, the combined impact of these background variables for the Chinese was about half that for the Koreans, one-third smaller than for the Thai, and just slightly smaller than for either the Japanese or the New Zealand-Australian students. Similarly, the unique influence of academic major, the most powerful factor in explaining the Chinese students' responses, was similar for the Chinese to that for the other national groups.

Summary

We may conclude that gender, father's occupation, religious affiliation, educational level, and academic major,

jointly or independently, had little impact on the students' responses to the statements concerning meaning, suffering, injustice, religion, and politics among all national student groups. The total amount of variance explained by these five background variables together ranged from .010 to .147, whereas the value of the unique variance explained ranged from zero to .123. In all cases, the values of the total as well as the unique largest variances accounted for by these five background variables were the smallest for the Chinese students. Thus, they have the least impact on the Chinese students' responses to the statements about the issues of meaning, suffering, injustice, religion, and politics.

The significance of these findings is that the attitudes towards the issues contained in the 20 Likert-type statements concerning the meaning of life, suffering, injustice, and the function of religion and politics are universal among the students, regardless of their nationality, gender, father's occupation, religious affiliation, educational level, and academic major, and thus lend support to Yinger's concept of religion.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have found that, in general, variations in the students' perceptions of, and their attitudes towards, the issues of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice were larger between the national groups than within each national group, and we have interpreted these variations as being the results of either past socio-cultural backgrounds or present economico-political experiences of the respective national student groups. We have also found that, in most crucial cases, attitudes among most national groups showed considerable similarity, their differences notwithstanding; and that the Chinese students, in most instances, did not differ substantially from most other groups in their attitudes towards the themes of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice.

The overall findings, which are displayed in Table 9.1, did not disprove Yinger's thesis (1977:68) that meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice constitute a substructure underlying all religions, and did lend support to Yinger's hypotheses (1977:67-68): (1) that interest in questions of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice would be widespread among the respondents; (2) that these problems would

TABLE 9.1 An Overview of Perceived Permanent Problems for Mankind; Responses to the Statements Concerning Meaning, Suffering, Injustice, Religion, and Politics; Measures of Ideal and Personal Experience on the Scales of Injustice, Suffering, and Meaninglessness; and the Proportion of the Total Variance in the Responses to the Statements about Meaning, Suffering, Injustice, Religion, and Politics jointly Explained by Gender, Father's Occupation, Religious Affiliation, Educational Level, and Academic Major

(in percent)

| | Nationality ^a | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| <u>Permanent Problems</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | 88.2 | 69.5 | 22.5 | 57.1 | 45.3 |
| Suffering | 36.0 | 30.4 | 64.1 | 64.9 | 55.0 |
| Injustice | 33.1 | 23.8 | 29.6 | 45.9 | 29.5 |
| Other | 5.9 | 12.0 | 15.5 | 6.9 | 11.7 |
| <u>Responses to Statements on</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning | | | | | |
| 1. I often wonder about the meaning of life (agree) | 89.1 | 87.3 | 85.7 | 80.3 | 86.0 |
| 2. I am not interested in the discussion about the meaning of life (disagree) | 67.4 | 77.8 | 72.1 | 89.0 | 68.3 |
| 3. I believe there is an order and pattern to existence (agree) | 33.5 | 65.0 | 63.0 | 69.9 | 83.1 |
| 4. The meaning of life is beyond human understanding (agree) | 49.2 | 73.6 | 90.8 | 45.9 | 71.0 |

TABLE 9.1 (cont.)

| | Nationality ^a | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| Suffering | | | | | |
| 1. The amount of suffering has been significantly reduced (disagree) | 90.5 | 89.5 | 63.4 | 67.5 | 68.9 |
| 2. The amount of suffering has increased in the world (agree) | 47.8 | 79.7 | 77.1 | 40.5 | 48.4 |
| 3. Mankind is unlikely to reduce the extent of suffering (agree) | 79.7 | 87.3 | 71.6 | 46.6 | 62.1 |
| 4. The reduction of suffering is not critically important (disagree) | 72.5 | 58.0 | 68.0 | 67.8 | 77.5 |
| Injustice | | | | | |
| 1. The amount of injustice has been significantly reduced (disagree) | 70.6 | 90.2 | 75.8 | 58.8 | 53.8 |
| 2. The amount of injustice has increased in the world (agree) | 41.3 | 79.0 | 83.8 | 29.5 | 44.3 |
| 3. Mankind is unlikely to reduce the extent of injustice (agree) | 75.9 | 82.6 | 90.9 | 57.9 | 71.0 |
| 4. The reduction of injustice is not critically important (disagree) | 76.6 | 49.3 | 60.8 | 63.9 | 75.8 |
| Religion | | | | | |
| 1. Difficult experiences are often the source of understanding and endurance (agree) | 89.0 | 91.7 | 66.9 | 75.6 | 84.5 |
| 2. Suffering, Injustice, and even death can be given meaning by faith (agree) | 91.2 | 78.3 | 81.2 | 78.9 | 85.6 |
| 3. Undeserving persons often seem to win the most advantages (disagree) | 69.3 | 52.4 | 28.8 | 58.2 | 37.4 |

TABLE 9.1 (cont.)

| | Nationality ^a | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| 4. In face of continuous conflict and violence, peaceful coexistence seem to be impossible (disagree) | 53.6 | 40.3 | 54.5 | 48.2 | 57.7 |
| 5. To deal with man's most difficult problems by religious means is a waste of time and resources (disagree) | 60.9 | 63.6 | 55.2 | 63.1 | 67.0 |
| 6. Efforts of world's religions to deal with man's most difficult questions are valuable (agree) | 49.6 | 69.2 | 86.4 | 79.7 | 91.9 |
| Politics | | | | | |
| 1. To deal with man's most difficult problems by political means is a waste of time and resources (disagree) | 54.0 | 32.2 | 44.7 | 58.3 | 51.4 |
| 2. Suffering and injustice can be reduced by wise political action (disagree) | 42.6 | 52.1 | 50.0 | 47.2 | 37.4 |
| <u>Measures of Ideal and Experience on Scale of</u> | | | | | |
| Injustice | | | | | |
| a. Perceived in the world (median score) | 5.71 | 3.08 | 3.90 | 5.64 | 4.43 |
| b. Personally experienced (median score) | 3.69 | 5.99 | 5.32 | 2.05 | 3.28 |
| Suffering | | | | | |
| a. Perceived in the world (median score) | 5.35 | 4.68 | 3.51 | 5.97 | 4.38 |
| b. Personally experienced (median score) | 4.08 | 5.66 | 5.30 | 1.95 | 3.24 |

TABLE 9.1 (cont.)

| | Nationality ^a | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| Meaninglessness | | | | | |
| a. Perceived in the world (median score) | 3.10 | 2.68 | 2.52 | 4.15 | 2.35 |
| b. Personally experienced (median score) | 2.21 | 3.66 | 2.22 | 2.44 | 1.90 |
| <u>The Proportion of the Total Variance jointly Explained by Background Variables in the Responses to the Statements about</u> | | | | | |
| Meaning (R ²) | .089 | .050 | .045 | .063 | .019 |
| Suffering (R ²) | .115 | .029 | .068 | .028 | .026 |
| Injustice (R ²) | .057 | .032 | .070 | .037 | .010 |
| Religion (R ²) | .114 | .097 | .039 | .147 | .035 |
| Politics (R ²) | .033 | .061 | .47 | .036 | .029 |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

be seen as persistent and intractable; (3) that the belief would prevail, nevertheless, that these problems could finally be dealt with despite their enduring quality by our beliefs and actions. In this chapter, we will present a summary of the basic findings of this study followed by a discussion on Yinger's approach to the study of religion.

Summary of the Findings

Perceived Permanent Problems for Mankind

In order to determine whether the problems that are seen by the respondents as fundamental and enduring are indeed variations of the underlying themes of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, i.e., the parameters of the substructure of religion, the students were asked to state the problem they considered as the most basic and permanent for mankind.

The overwhelming majority of the Japanese, Korean, Thai, New Zealand-Australian, and Chinese students perceived the questions of meaning, suffering, and injustice as the fundamental and permanent problems for mankind; only a small proportion of the students failed to refer to problems related at least to one of these three themes.

All three themes appeared in each national group, but the pattern of distribution varied, as Yinger assumed (1977:72-73), from one group to another. The Japanese,

Korean, and Thai students tended to focus on a single problem. The Japanese and Korean students put more emphasis on meaning as man's permanent problem than on suffering and injustice, while the Thais gave more attention to suffering than to either meaning or injustice. Among the New Zealand-Australia respondents, the three problems were more evenly distributed; no particular issue outweighed the other two as conspicuously as in the Japanese, Korean, or Thai cases. The Chinese seemed to fall between these two patterns. They were concerned about suffering, but they were also very interested in the question of meaning. On the issue of injustice, the Chinese were far less sensitive than the New Zealand-Australian students and were much like their Asian counterparts.

Because controlling for background variables did not change the configuration of combination of these themes in all samples, we looked for an explanation for these different patterns in sociocultural backgrounds and current economic-political experiences of these student groups. In this regard, the Japanese students' concentration on meaning as man's permanent problem could, to a large extent, be explained by the general postwar identity crisis in Japan resulting from the collapse of the divine emperor ideology subsequent to Japan's defeat. The Korean students' emphasis on meaning may well result from the continuous

frustration in their struggle for the ideal of a democratic and just society and their preference for idealism over material comfort imparted by Confucian socialization. We believed that Buddhism, the chief concern of which is suffering, was the main contributing factor to the Thai students' stress on suffering as man's enduring problem. We attributed the New Zealand-Australian students' perception of meaning as man's basic problem to the Christian preoccupation with the divine purpose for man; their interest in suffering, to the continuous Christian socialization and encouragement to help the poor in the world; and their concern about injustice, to the national passion for egalitarianism shared by the citizens of both countries. The Chinese students' interest in meaning as man's fundamental issue was partly due to the traditional interest in the philosophy of life among the Chinese intellectuals and partly due to the disintegrating effects of rapid modernization in Taiwan. The Chinese concern about suffering could be explained partly by the poverty of the recent past and partly by the preoccupation with people's livelihood in their political socialization (San Min Chu I). It was emphatically pointed out that these interpretations were speculative in nature and should be revised by future researches.

We have argued that, since the themes of meaningless-

ness, suffering, and injustice are seen (Yinger, 1970: 6-7; 1977:72-73) as deep-rooted, non-rational emotional needs with varying saliency and distribution in each individual and society, they need not have emerged to consciousness with equal force at the time of data collection; indeed, they need not have emerged to consciousness at all. It is thus difficult to hold that the data did not support Yinger's thesis that meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice constitute the substructure of religion, even though only 7 to 27 percent of the students (Table 5.1) reported all three problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice as man's fundamental and permanent problems and even when we take each national sample as a whole, in four national groups only one problem--either meaning or suffering--(Table 5.52) was considered as man's ultimate concern. This, of course, can call into serious question the adequacy of the open-ended survey methods as a research tool in the study of the substructure of religion. We will have more to say about this later.

Attitudes Towards the Statements on Meaning, Suffering, Injustice, Religion, and Politics

In order to explore whether there is a widespread interest in the problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, whether these problems are seen as persistent and intractable, and whether there is a conviction

that these problems can be given meaning and significance by our faith, Yinger designed 20 Likert-type statements concerning meaning, suffering, injustice, religion, and politics.

The Problem of Meaning An overwhelming majority of the students in all samples reported that they often wondered what life is about and were interested in the discussion of the question of meaning of life. Except for the Japanese students, the majority of the respondents believed that there is an order of some kind behind the world of experiences; but there was disagreement among the students as to whether the meaning of life is beyond our human understanding. Thus, while an overwhelming or large majority of the Korean, Thai, and Chinese gave an affirmative answer to the statement, the Japanese and New Zealand-Australian respondents were almost evenly split. What marked the Chinese students off in their responses to the statements on the issue of meaning was that they were more convinced than students in any other national group that there is some order in the universe despite the apparent disorder and confusion in life. This, we thought, was due to the traditional Chinese belief in the harmonious working of the universe.

The Problem of Suffering We found that a majority to an overwhelming majority of the students disagreed that

in recent generations there has been a significant reduction in suffering, and that the reduction of suffering on earth is not a crucially important question of mankind. Except for the New Zealand-Australian students, most of the students also felt that the amount of suffering is unlikely to diminish in the future; but on the question of whether suffering in the world has increased, students living in established or growing prosperity differed greatly from those from less prosperous countries. Thus, less than half of the Japanese, New Zealand-Australian, and Chinese students agreed with the statement in contrast with close to four-fifths of the Korean and Thai respondents. Besides the question on the increase of suffering in the world, the Chinese did not differ much from students from most other countries in their attitudes towards suffering.

The Problem of Injustice The pattern of responses to the statements concerning injustice was very similar to the one concerning suffering. A majority to an overwhelming majority of the students disagreed that, in recent generations, injustice has been significantly reduced and agreed that the amount of injustice is unlikely to be reduced in the future. Except for the Koreans, the majority also believed a reduction of injustice is the crucially important task for mankind. Again, it seemed very difficult for students from democratic and egalitarian societies

to agree that injustice has increased in the world. Thus, about four-fifths of the Korean and Thai students believed that injustice has increased as compared to two-fifths of the Japanese and Chinese, and only one-third of the New Zealand-Australian respondents. Again, except on the statement regarding the increase of injustice, the Chinese did not differ substantially from students from most other national groups in their attitudes towards the issue of injustice.

The Function of Religion The overwhelming majority of students agreed that devastating experiences can be a source of endurance and understanding, and that suffering, injustice, and even death can be given meaning. The majority do not believe that religious efforts to deal with man's difficult problems are a waste of time and resources, and most students in all samples, but the Japanese, believed that religious efforts are valuable, even though they may not agree with their beliefs and practices. As to whether men can learn to coexist peacefully, the students were not so sure. Only about half of the students rejected the idea that men cannot live together with peace and respect. As to whether undeserving people often win the most advantages in the long run, the respondents were not in agreement. More than two-thirds of the Japanese, and a little more than one-half of the Korean and New Zealand-Australian students dis-

agreed with this idea in contrast to one-third of the Thai and Chinese students. Prominent in the students' responses to the statements concerning religion is that a majority of Chinese students, despite their firm belief in an order in the universe, agreed that undeserving persons often do win the most advantages in life; that is, there is no final justice. We believed that this is because the order that the Chinese believe in is not a divine order, but a naturalistic one; hence, it does not have to do with final justice at all.

The Function of Politics The students were more or less evenly divided in their evaluation of the function of politics, although the odds were still on the positive side. It is understandable that students living under totalitarian and corrupted regimes were less favorably disposed toward the function of politics than those living under democratic rule. Thus, the Korean and Thai students were less likely to disagree that political efforts in reducing suffering and injustice were a waste of time and resources. They were also more likely to disagree that one can reduce suffering and injustice through wise political actions than the Japanese, New Zealand-Australian, and Chinese students. The Chinese were more convinced than any other national groups that suffering and injustice can be reduced by political means.

When the students were confronted directly with the questions of meaninglessness, suffering, injustice, and the function of religion and politics, the Chinese data, as well as Yinger's, do bear out Yinger's hypotheses that there is a widespread concern about the problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice; that these problems are seen as fundamental to human life; and that there is a general conviction that man can cope with these problems through beliefs and actions.

Perceived and Experienced Extent of Meaninglessness, Suffering, and Injustice

Religion is seen by Yinger as a result of man's victory over the continuing threat of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. Since religion is posited as a universal phenomenon, one would expect that most people would consider their lives as well as the lives of others as meaningful, despite the unremitting menace of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. To test this hypothesis, Yinger designed six items, and the respondents were asked to respond on a seven-point rating scale.

Perceived Injustice, Suffering, and Meaningfulness

We have found that compared with their ideal, the Japanese and New Zealand-Australian students tended to see more injustice in the world than the Korean and Thai respondents,

with the Chinese falling in between. We thought that this was because students living in democratic and egalitarian societies might tend to set a higher ideal of justice for mankind and thus perceived more injustice in the world than those living in totalitarian societies. We also believed that it was due to the same psychological process that the Japanese and New Zealand-Australian students perceived more suffering in the world than the Korean, Thai, and Chinese students. Students living in affluent societies might tend to set a higher standard of living for the rest of the world and thus tend to be more sensitive to the plight of other people. As to the meaninglessness in the world, we thought it might also be owing to the same psychological working that the Japanese and New Zealand-Australian students saw more meaninglessness in the lives of most people than the Korean, Thai, and Chinese students.

Yet, when we compare students' perceptions on the extent of all three issues--injustice, suffering, and meaninglessness--we found that although they perceived a great deal of suffering and injustice in the world, they believed that life is meaningful for most people. This implies that students from all national groups believed that somehow people have managed to make some sense out of their lives, even if fraught with poverty and injustice.

Experienced Injustice, Suffering, and Meaningfulness It was found that, compared with most other people of their respective countries, the Korean and Thai students reported they had suffered more injustice while the Japanese, New Zealand-Australian, and Chinese said they had experienced less. We guessed that the Korean and Thai students, struggling as champions of justice, might have been more sensitive to injustice than most of their countrymen. On the suffering scale the response pattern was similar. Whereas the Korean and Thai students stated that they had suffered more than most of their fellow citizens, the Japanese, New Zealand-Australian, and Chinese reported they had suffered less. We were puzzled by such responses since most of the Korean and Thai students were from small business and white-collar families. Yet, we guessed that since economical development in both countries started only in the 1960's, it may very well be that white-collar jobs or small business were for many families of these students just newly acquired upward occupations. Without exception, students from all national groups found their own life more meaningful compared with the lives of their countrymen. We believed that, as the future elite of their respective countries, these students had every reason to find their lives more meaningful than others.

The overall findings indicate that, despite the per-

ception and experience of high levels of injustice and suffering, the Chinese as well as students from Yinger's samples believed and felt that life was meaningful both for themselves and for most other people.

Effects of Some Background Variables on the Responses to the Statements Concerning Meaning, Suffering, Injustice, Religion, and Politics

Even though meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice are seen as part of common human experiences and the substructure of all religions, the variety of ways of coping with these problems suggests a variety of attitudes towards them. It is well known that attitudes towards such broad issues as the meaning of life, suffering, and injustice are determined more by norms, values, and experiences shared by members of a nation than by those shared by members of gender, social class, educational level, and other social background (Yinger, 1977:78-79). Hence, one would not expect much correlation between one's attitudes towards the issues of meaning, suffering, and injustice and his background such as gender, father's occupation, religion, educational level, and academic major.

We found that gender, father's occupation, religious affiliation, educational level, and academic major had little effect on the students' responses to the statements about meaning, suffering, injustice, religion, and

politics among all national groups. The total amount of variation explained by these five variables ranged from .10 to .147, and the values of the unique variation explained ranged from zero to .123. In all cases, the values of the total variation as well as the single largest unique variation accounted for by these five background variables were the smallest among the Chinese students. Since the values were so small, we did not attempt to offer any interpretation for the differences, for fear they might be too farfetched or even misleading.

Discussion of Yinger's Approach to Religion

Yinger's approach to the study of religion is avowedly (1977:3-10) only one of the purported scientific approaches in research on religion: the functional approach. The functional approach focuses on what religion does for man or society and tends to define religion very broadly. Yinger conceived religion as a superempirical tool created by man to solve his basic problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. His main objective is to search for a general theory that can be applied to all religions including non-theistic belief systems. Thus, he is not looking for the particular but for the features common to all religions, theistic and non-theistic alike. Thus, those (Wright and D'Antonio, 1980) who criticized him for his failure to take into account the vertical di-

mension of supernatural religions, lost sight of Yinger's whole approach.

It is futile to debate over the different approaches to the scientific study of religion. Each approach serves a particular purpose, and no approach serves all purposes. All approaches may be equally useful, but for different purposes. Commenting on this issue, Machalek remarked:

Different definitions and definitional strategies make available different kinds of information about the social world. Definitions must be evaluated, then, in terms of their usefulness in producing a specific type of information. It is irresponsible to criticize definitions for their inadequacies in failing to provide the kinds of informations for which they were not constructed. It is misplaced to criticize functional definitions for obscuring variation in the subjective meaning experiences hold for actors. Different definitions are constructed to different ends.

In Yinger's view, religion is universally given as language is universally given. This realization of the similarity between religion and language suggested to him a research methodology that was modeled after modern linguistics. Modern linguistics shifted its preoccupation from description of the surface structure of particular languages to its present interest in analysis of the underlying structure shared by all languages. Both approaches share the ultimate objective of establishing a general theory of language, but they differ in their methodological emphases. While linguists interested in describing surface structure sought language universals by comparing

speech expressions such as phonemes and morphemes and by identifying the similarities among languages, those engaged in studying the underlying structures normally first posited a linguistic theory and then test it through analysis of speech data. Thus, while one approach moves from the overt and particular to the covert and general, the other approach proceeds just the other way around. In other words, one method is inductive, the other deductive. In his pursuit of a general theory of religion, Yinger shifted his emphasis from taxonomic and descriptive analysis of the surface structure of particular religions (1969, 1970) to direct exploration and testing of the substructure of religion as such (1977). Thus, he shifted from an emphasis on inductive method to deductive.

That Yinger in his discussion of the underlying structures of religion did not adopt the well-known linguistic term "deep structure," as Anthony et al. (1974) and Grimmshaw (1972) had done before him, was probably because the term "deep structure," which was introduced by Chomsky in 1965 (Chomsky, 1965:135-136) and dropped by him again in 1975 (Chomsky, 1975:82), is a technical vocabulary in transformational-generative linguistics and has a well-defined meaning. Indeed, it would be inappropriate to apply the term "deep structure" to Yinger's "substructure," since conceptually they represent two different

things. While in transformational linguistics the term "deep structure" concerns linguistic competence and has to do with the creative process of language itself, Yinger's substructure of religion--meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice--is seen rather as a stimulus or condition that triggers man's ability to design "religious" responses.

What Yinger attempts to do is to see if all problems that are perceived as empirically unsolvable are indeed the surface manifestations of the underlying themes of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. Strictly speaking, Yinger's discussion of the substructures of religion has little to do with the creative process of religion itself. The same problem can be dealt with in different ways, even superempirically.

In discussion of the substructure of religion, three fundamental questions are involved: (1) whether there is such a substructure; (2) what are its features; and (3) how it is related to the surface structure of religion.

In modern linguistics, an inborn structure underlying all languages is boldly postulated on the assumption that all languages share some general linguistic features and all languages reflect certain fundamental properties (Langacker, 1968:240-248; Eastman, 1978:125-152). Similarly, Yinger, in a theoretical leap, has posited a pan-

human experiential structure underlying all religions on the assumption that all religions have some common traits and reflect certain fundamental psychological properties.

Since superempirical systems of belief and rite are found everywhere, if not universally, it seems reasonable to suppose that they are related to experiences that are humanwide, resting upon some common substructure. Thus, despite the vast differences among the religions of the world, one who examines them from this perspective has no difficulty in seeing them as somehow alike. They fit into the human enterprise in similar ways (Yinger, 1977:67).

Modern linguists are vying in identifying the specific features of the alleged underlying "innately specified, species-uniform and species-specific" (Langacker, 1968:247) linguistic structure (Eastman, 1978; Newmeyer, 1980). Similarly, Yinger postulated, again without providing clear evidence, that the substructure of religion consists of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice.

Years of research, study, and reflection have led me to the belief that religion rests upon the persistent experience of suffering and meaninglessness. These experiences are widely recognized as the roots of religion.

Just as modern linguists seek to describe linguistic surface structure in terms of the alleged underlying structure (Bolinger, 1968; Eastman, 1978:129), Yinger analyzes the surface problems, the problems that are seen as persistent and intractable, in terms of his proposed substructure of religion, i.e., meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice. However, modern linguists have proposed

various transformational-generative rules to show the transformational relationship between the surface structure and the assumed underlying linguistic structure, whereas in other social sciences such transformational-generative rules are not yet available, even though Grimshaw (1972) has tried. Yinger (1973) did show how he classified the surface problems in terms of his proposed underlying problems but failed to provide the rationale. Thus, it is difficult to understand why "love" is considered a variation of all three underlying themes of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, while "religion"--the substructure of which is supposed to be meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice--is considered as a category unrelated to any of the three basic problems (Yinger, 1973). Similar questions can be raised about his other classifications. It is just this kind of classificatory problem that can create suspicion that a given finding might not be so much a reflection of reality as an artifact of a certain classificatory scheme (see Wright and D'Antonio, 1980). Unless the relationships between the surface problems and the assumed underlying problems are clearly specified, such suspicion can never be eliminated.

We have argued that Yinger's thesis of the substructure of religion can be illustrated but cannot be refuted by empirical data. This is because, just as in

linguistics the underlying structure refers to "thought and ideas" which need not be present in conscious experience and so need not be available to introspective observation and thus "are not publicly observable either" (Katz, 1967:181), Yinger's substructure of religion refers to experiences or needs that are deep-seated, sub-rational, or non-rational (Yinger, 1970:6-7) and thus need not necessarily surface to the consciousness at all times and with equal force. Indeed, we doubt that there is any research method available that can be used to reject theories thus far put forward with regard to the underlying structures of religion which, by definition, lies underneath the particular manifestations of religion. In depth psychology, various theories have been advanced--and may more will certainly be proposed in the future--but so far we have no valid scientific criteria to judge which one of them is true and which one is wrong, and for that matter, which one is better than the other (Pye, 1979:534). Similar problems are encountered in the many psychoanalytical and depth-psychological analyses of symbols in general (Goldammer, 1979:498-518). This dilemma seems insurmountable. On the one hand, the substructure is by definition underlying the surface of religion, and on the other hand, the surface manifestations of religion are the only data available to us to study the substructure of religion.

Yinger (1977:67) suggested his triple classification of the problems that religion has to deal with has its antecedents. Geertz (1964:653) spoke of religion as a means to cope with the three problems of bafflement, suffering, and sense of ethical paradox. O'Dea (1966: 2-7) sees that the role of religion is to assist men to adjust to the three brute facts of contingency, powerlessness, and scarcity. King (1968:228-236) believes that religion has been designed to meet man's three fundamental needs: the physical, social-cultural, and psychi-personal, depending on the saliency and urgency of these needs at a particular time and place. It seems that Yinger, in classifying man's permanent problems into meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, has attempted to give some substance to the more abstract classification schemes of other writers; but in doing so, what he has gained in precision cannot compensate his loss in inclusiveness. He thus has not only created the potential criticism that meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice are overlapping, since meaninglessness and injustice are also forms of suffering, but he has also made his classification of the permanent problems strenuous. As indicated above, classification has always been a problem in social science, and we do not pretend to be able to propose any definite solutions; but it seems to us to be more fruitful to follow

King's lead to differentiate man's problems into physical, social, and psychological problems, since such a classification scheme is more inclusive if a three-pronged substructure of religion is necessary at all.

Implications

We have summarized the basic findings of this study and pointed out several problems related to Yinger's approach to the scientific study of religion. From the problems just discussed, it became clear that Yinger's thesis of the substructure of religion cannot be rejected by empirical means and his hypotheses about the existence of a widespread interest in the problems of meaninglessness, suffering, and injustice, about the believed persistence and intractability of these problems, and about the general conviction that these problems can be dealt with by man's faith (despite their ultimate quality) have been born out only on the assumption that his classification scheme is granted validity. We have also indicated that Yinger's study of the substructure of religion deals only with the condition of or stimulus for religion and has, strictly speaking, left the creative process of religion itself virtually untouched.

Investigation of the creative process of religion, as the analyses of the language have done in linguistics,

will definitely create sustained controversy and excitement. For instance, how is religion created? To what extent is the formation of religion conditioned by the problems perceived? Is the capacity for religion innate or learned? What is precisely the nature of this capacity? Why do some people postulate the supernatural and some do not in their coping with man's ultimate concerns? What are the psychological and social constraints in the creative process of religion? These and many more questions of this nature can provide a wealth of material for the further study of religion.

Despite the several problems that have just been raised--which are by no means unique to Yinger's study--Yinger's approach to religion is no doubt one of the most interesting, provoking, and important developments in the history of the scientific study of religion, both for the new direction and the new area it has pointed to for research and for the new impulse it has given to the much neglected field of cross-cultural study in the pursuit of a general theory of religion.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES
OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Dear Student:

You have been chosen to participate in a study intended to be compared with an international study of the attitudes and opinions of university students. The questions being raised here do not refer to specific headlines or political questions, but to underlying values and basic promises. The objective is to see how these vary from person to person.

I would very much appreciate your cooperation in filling out this brief questionnaire. Needless to say, it is to be entirely anonymous.

Peter Chao
Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois
U.S.A.

INSTRUCTION: Please record the serial number of the questionnaire found on the upper right corner of the questionnaire on the answer sheet by darkening that number in columns 1-4 with a soft lead pencil.

Please answer the following four questions in the space provided under each question.

1. What do you consider the one most fundamental or important issue for the human race; that is, what do you see as the basic and permanent question for mankind, the question of which all others are only parts?

(5-6)

2. What are your beliefs with regard to the question you have stated above? By belief, I mean you are ready to affirm your statements about that question as certainly true even evidence is lacking.¹

^bIn order to render this question more understandable to the Chinese respondents, the wording has been modified according to the wording of the same question on an earlier short questionnaire (Yinger, 1969:93).

3. In what ways do you think your behavior is affected by your appraisal of the basic issue and your beliefs associated with it?

(10-12)

4. Are you a participant in or member of some group or organization for which the "basic, permanent question," and the beliefs connected with it are the focus of attention and the most important reasons for its existence?

(13-16)

Yes _____

No _____

If yes, please characterize the group briefly.

By what kinds of activities does the group express its concern for this most important issue noted above?

INSTRUCTION: The numbers in parentheses on the right-hand margin of the questionnaire should correspond to the bold-faced numbers in the boxes at the bottom of the columns on the answer sheet. Please watch the number assigned to each response category of the items on the questionnaire and the numbers 0 to 9 in each column on the answer sheet carefully and record your response choice on the answer sheet by darkening the appropriate number with a soft lead pencil. If a response has been assigned a two-digit number, use two columns for that response on the answer sheet. Make sure that you have no more than one response for each item.

Please answer the following four questions starting from column 17 on the answer sheet.

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|----------|----------|--------|
| Fully | Partly | Partly | Fully | Uncer- |
| Agree | Agree | Disagree | Disagree | tain |

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 5. Mankind's most difficult and destructive experiences are often the source of increased understanding and powers of endurance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (17) |
| 6. In the long run, undeserving persons often seem to be the ones who win the most advantages. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (18) |
| 7. Although mankind understands the world around him better, the basic meaning of life is beyond our understanding. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (19) |
| 8. In recent generations, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of human suffering. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (20) |

Fully Partly Partly Fully Uncer-
 Agree Agree Disagree Disagree tain

9. The types of injustice may have changed, may continue to change, but mankind is not likely to reduce the extent of injustice.

1 2 3 4 5 (21)

10. I am not very interested in discussion of the question of the meaning or meaninglessness of life.

1 2 3 4 5 (22)

11. It is a mistake to believe that the reduction of suffering on earth is the critically important question for mankind.

1 2 3 4 5 (23)

12. In face of the almost continuous conflict and violence in life, I cannot see how men are going to learn to live in mutual respect and peace with one another.

1 2 3 4 5 (24)

13. In recent generations, injustice has increased in the world.

1 2 3 4 5 (25)

| | Fully Agree | Partly Agree | Partly Disagree | Fully Disagree | Uncer- tain | |
|--|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
|--|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 14. Suffering, in-justice, and finally death need not be negative experiences; their significance can be shaped by our beliefs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (26) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 15. In recent generations, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of injustice in human life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (27) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 16. Efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems by political means seem to me to be a waste of time and resources. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (28) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 17. The types of human suffering may have changed, and may continue to change, but mankind is not likely to reduce the extent of suffering. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (29) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 18. Despite the often chaotic conditions of human life, I believe there is an order and pattern to existence that someday we will come to understand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (30) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|

Fully Partly Partly Fully Uncer-
Agree Agree Disagree Disagree tain

19. In recent generations, suffering has increased in the world. 1 2 3 4 5 (31)

20. It is a mistake to believe that the reduction of injustice on earth is the critically important question for mankind. 1 2 3 4 5 (32)

21. In the long run, mankind will be able to reduce injustice and suffering by wise political action. 1 2 3 4 5 (33)

22. I often wonder what life is all about. 1 2 3 4 5 (34)

23. Efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems by religious means seem to me to be a waste of time and resources. 1 2 3 4 5 (35)

24. There are many aspects of the beliefs and practices of the world's religions with which I might not agree; nevertheless I consider them to be valuable efforts to deal with man's most important questions. 1 2 3 4 5 (36)

Compared with my ideal, with the situation I
with were true, I believe that in the world:

25. There is very little injustice There is a great deal of injustice

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (37)

26. There is very little suffering There is a great deal of suffering

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (38)

27. Life is meaningful for most people Life is meaningless for most people

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (39)

Compared with most other people in your
country, what has been your own personal
experience?

28. I have experienced very little injustice I have experienced a great deal of injustice

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (40)

29. I have experienced very little suffering I have experienced a great deal of suffering

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (41)

30. I have a strong sense of meaningfulness of life I have a strong sense of meaninglessness of life

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (42)

Although these responses are anonymous, they will be more valuable if the answers for differing groups of people can be compared. So please answer the following questions carefully.

31. Gender

| | | |
|--------------|---|------|
| Male | 1 | (43) |
| Female | 2 | |

32. What year are you in college?

| | | |
|-----------------|---|------|
| Freshman | 1 | (44) |
| Sophomore | 2 | |
| Junior | 3 | |
| Senior | 4 | |

33. What is your academic major?

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----|---------|
| Economics | 01 | (45-46) |
| Law | 02 | |
| Psychology | 03 | |
| Sociology | 04 | |
| History | 05 | |
| Mass communication | 06 | |
| Business administration | 07 | |
| Accounting | 08 | |
| International trade | 09 | |
| Chinese literature | 10 | |
| English | 11 | |
| German | 12 | |
| French | 13 | |
| Spanish | 14 | |
| Oriental languages | 15 | |
| Philosophy | 16 | |
| Social worker | 17 | |
| Library science | 18 | |
| Physical education | 19 | |
| Chemistry | 20 | |
| Biology | 21 | |
| Physics | 22 | |
| Mathematics | 23 | |
| Electronic engineering | 24 | |
| Statistics | 25 | |
| Home economics | 26 | |
| Nutrition and food | 27 | |
| Textiles and clothing | 28 | |

34. What is your father's occupation?

| | | |
|---|----|---------|
| Physician | 01 | (47-48) |
| Dentist | 02 | |
| Lawyer | 03 | |
| Professor | 04 | |
| Minister | 05 | |
| Architect or engineer | 06 | |
| Other professional | 07 | |
| Government official | 08 | |
| Military officer | 09 | |
| President, member of boards of directors, or other major firm official | 10 | |
| Accountant | 11 | |
| Builder or contractor | 12 | |
| Insurance | 13 | |
| Land owner | 14 | |
| Small business (owner or manager) | 15 | |
| Civil servant | 16 | |
| Teacher (below college level) | 17 | |
| Salesman | 18 | |
| Social worker, nurse, or police | 19 | |
| Librarian | 20 | |
| Other white-collar worker | 21 | |
| Technician or mechanic | 22 | |
| Skilled craftsman (carpenter, pottery, or textiles) | 23 | |
| Blue-collar supervisor | 24 | |
| Maintenance personnel (janitor, grounds keeper, or gardener) | 25 | |
| Service occupation (transportation, res- taurant, or hairdressing) | 26 | |
| Factory worker | 27 | |
| Mining | 28 | |
| Odd jobs | 29 | |
| Farming | 30 | |
| Fishing | 31 | |
| Armed forces (non-officer) | 32 | |
| Other unspecified occupation | 33 | |

35. What is your father's religion?

| | | |
|---|----|---------|
| Confucianism | 01 | (49-50) |
| Taoism | 02 | |
| Buddhism | 03 | |
| Any mixture of these three religions | 04 | |
| Catholicism | 05 | |
| Protestantism | 06 | |
| Muslim | 07 | |
| Other religion | 08 | |
| No religion, atheism | 09 | |
| I am not sure | 10 | |

36. What is your mother's religion? (51-52)
- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| Confucianism | 01 | |
| Taoism | 02 | |
| Buddhism | 03 | |
| Any mixture of these three religions | 04 | |
| Catholicism | 05 | |
| Protestantism | 06 | |
| Muslim | 07 | |
| Other religion | 08 | |
| No religion, atheism | 09 | |
| I am not sure | 10 | |
37. Are you a member of a church, temple, or other religious organization? (53)
- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
- If yes, (54)
- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Confucianist | 1 | |
| Taoist | 2 | |
| Buddhist | 3 | |
| Any mixture of these three religions | 4 | |
| Catholic | 5 | |
| Protestant | 6 | |
| Muslim | 7 | |
| Other | 8 | |
38. How important would you say that religion is to you? (55)
- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Very important | 1 | |
| Quite important | 2 | |
| Not very important | 3 | |
| Not important at all | 4 | |

Thank you very much.

APPENDIX B

大學生態度之比較研究

同學：

請您參與一項對大學生態度的國際研究，您是以抽樣方式選到參加此項研究的。這裡所提出的問題只涉及人生的基本價值與前提，與頭條新聞和政治問題無關；其目的在於瞭解不同的大學生對它們的看法有何區別。

對您的誠意合作，答好此短短的問卷，特此預謝。這項調查當然是不記名的。

趙沛鐸 美國芝加哥勞耀拉大學

注意：問卷右上角的號碼是問卷的編號，請將此號碼抄寫在回答表上的1至4行內，即用鉛筆塗黑相稱的數字。

請在每問題下的空間內回答以下的四個問題。

1. 您認為人類最基本或最重要的問題是什麼；就是說，據您看，什麼是人類的根本和永存的問題。所謂最基本或最重要的問題是指的，與此問題相比，其他問題皆屬次要，僅為此問題的部份而已。
(5—6)

2. 您對以上您所指出的人類基本問題有何信念。所謂信念是指的，您對此問題的看法，雖無實證，仍堅持不移。
(7—9)

3. 您認為您對人類基本問題的評價以及與其相關的信念如何影響了您的行為？
(10—13)

4. 您是否為某團體或某組織的一員或參與者；不論大小，此團體或組織存在的主要原因和討論的重心是人類的根本問題和與其相關的信念。
(14)

是 _____

否 _____

- 如果答案為是，請簡介此團體或組織。
(15)

- 此團體以何種活動來表達其對人類基本問題的關切？
(16)

注意：問卷右邊括弧內的號碼是回答表上的行數，此數字應與回答表上每排每行底方塊內的粗體數字相稱。請注意問卷上各問題後給每一答案所指定的數字以及回答表上每行內的數字0至9，答問時，請用鉛筆塗黑相稱的數字。如果某一答案有兩個數字，在回答表上就請用兩行。切記，對每一問題只選一個答案。

回答以下的問題時，請在回答表上由17行開始。

| 完 同 | 全 意 | 部 同 | 分 意 | 部 不同 | 分 意 | 完 不同 | 全 意 | 不 定 | 確 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---|
|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---|

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 5.人類最艱難與最具毀滅性的經驗，往往是增加諒解與耐力的來源。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (17) |
| 6.世界上通常那些似乎最不應該得便宜的人最後却得到最多的便宜。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (18) |
| 7.雖然人類對自己的世界與環境已有更清楚的認識，但對人生的基本意義我們仍無法瞭解。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (19) |
| 8.近幾代來人類受苦的總量已顯著減少。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (20) |
| 9.人類經歷不公平的方式可能已改變而且也可能繼續改變，但人類似不會減少不公平的程度。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (21) |
| 10.我對討論人生之有無意義的問題不大感興趣。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (22) |
| 11.相信減少人世痛苦是人類極端重要的問題即是一種錯誤。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (23) |
| 12.面對着人生多種繼續不斷的衝突與暴行，我無法瞭解人類如何能學着相敬共處。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (24) |
| 13.近幾代來，世上的不公平已增加。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (25) |
| 14.痛苦、不公平、甚至最後的死亡並不一定是否定的經驗，它們的意義可由我們的主義與信仰形成。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (26) |
| 15.近幾代來，人類生活中的不公平的程度已顯著減少。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (27) |
| 16.據我看，以政治方式處理人類最困難的問題的努力是既浪費時間又浪費資源。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (28) |
| 17.人類受苦的方式可能已改變而且也可能繼續改變，但人類似不可能減低受苦的程度。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (29) |
| 18.雖然人世經常混亂不堪，但我仍相信人世是有秩序和規律的，而且終有一日，我們會瞭解這些秩序與規律的。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (30) |

| 完 同 | 全 意 | 部 同 | 分 意 | 部 分 不 同 意 | 完 全 不 同 意 | 不 確 定 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|

19. 近幾代來，世界上痛苦的程度已增加。 1 2 3 4 5 (31)
20. 相信減少世上的不公平是人類極端重要的問題即是一種錯誤。 1 2 3 4 5 (32)
21. 終有一日，人類會以明智的政治行動減少世上的不公平與痛苦。 1 2 3 4 5 (33)
22. 我經常思索人生到底是怎麼一回事。 1 2 3 4 5 (34)
23. 依我看，致力於以宗教方式處理人類最困難的問題既浪費時間又浪費資源。 1 2 3 4 5 (35)
24. 縱然我或不可能同意世上宗教許多的信仰和儀式但我認為在處理人類最重要的問題上，這些宗教仍是有價值的努力。 1 2 3 4 5 (36)

與我的理想相較，就是說，在我所希望是事實的情況下，我相信在世上

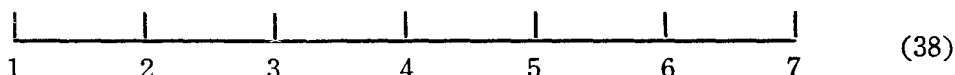
25 不公平的事很少

不公平的事很多



26 痛苦的事很少

痛苦的事很多



27 對大多數人而言，生命是有意義的

對大多數人而言，生命是無意義的



與國內大多數人相比，您個人的經驗如何？

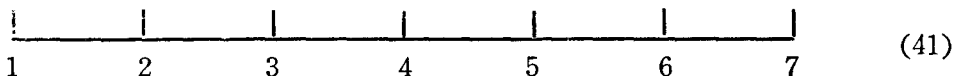
28 我經歷到很少不公平的事

我經歷到很多不公平的事



29 我遭受到很少的痛苦

我遭受到很多的痛苦



30 我深感生命有意義

我深感生命無意義



雖然這些答案是無名的，但若能把各種學生的答案作一比較，將更有價值，故此請您細心回答下列各問題。

31 您的性別是什麼？

- | | | |
|--------|---|------|
| 男..... | 1 | (43) |
| 女..... | 2 | |

32 您就讀大學幾年級？

- | | | |
|----------|---|------|
| 一年級..... | 1 | (44) |
| 二年級..... | 2 | |
| 三年級..... | 3 | |
| 四年級..... | 4 | |

33 您主修那一科？

- | | | |
|-----------|----|---------|
| 經濟..... | 01 | (45—46) |
| 法律..... | 02 | |
| 心理..... | 03 | |
| 社會學..... | 04 | |
| 歷史..... | 05 | |
| 大眾傳播..... | 06 | |
| 工商管理..... | 07 | |
| 會計..... | 08 | |
| 國際貿易..... | 09 | |
| 中國文學..... | 10 | |
| 英文..... | 11 | |
| 德文..... | 12 | |
| 法文..... | 13 | |
| 西班牙文..... | 14 | |
| 東方語文..... | 15 | |
| 哲學..... | 16 | |
| 社會工作..... | 17 | |
| 圖書館..... | 18 | |
| 體育..... | 19 | |
| 化學..... | 20 | |
| 生物..... | 21 | |
| 物理..... | 22 | |
| 數學..... | 23 | |
| 電子工程..... | 24 | |
| 統計..... | 25 | |

| | |
|-----------|----|
| 家政..... | 26 |
| 食品營養..... | 27 |
| 織品服裝..... | 28 |

34 您父親的職業是什麼？

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| 醫生..... | 01 |
| 牙醫..... | 02 |
| 律師..... | 03 |
| 教授..... | 04 |
| 牧師..... | 05 |
| 建築師或工程..... | 06 |
| 其他專業..... | 07 |
| 政府高級官員..... | 08 |
| 高級軍官..... | 09 |
| 大企業經理、營業或其他大企業重要職員..... | 10 |
| 會計師..... | 11 |
| 建築商..... | 12 |
| 保險經紀..... | 13 |
| 地主..... | 14 |
| 經營小企業(業主、經理)..... | 15 |
| 佐理人員(速記、打字、簿記、出納、秘書等)..... | 16 |
| 中小學教員..... | 17 |
| 售貨員..... | 18 |
| 社會工作者、護士、警察..... | 19 |
| 圖書館員..... | 20 |
| 其他白領工作者..... | 21 |
| 專門技術或機械工人..... | 22 |
| 手工匠(木、陶、紡織等)..... | 23 |
| 監工人員(工頭、領班等)..... | 24 |
| 修護工人(房宅、道路、園丁等)..... | 25 |
| 服務工作者(旅遊、理髮、餐廳等)..... | 26 |
| 工廠工人..... | 27 |
| 礦工..... | 28 |
| 雜工..... | 29 |
| 務農..... | 30 |
| 業漁..... | 31 |
| 軍人(非軍官)..... | 32 |
| 其他職業(以上未列入者)..... | 33 |

(47—48)

35 您父親的宗教是什麼？

| | | |
|-----------------|----|---------|
| 儒教..... | 01 | (49—50) |
| 道教..... | 02 | |
| 佛教..... | 03 | |
| 以上二教或三教的混合..... | 04 | |
| 天主教..... | 05 | |
| 基督教..... | 06 | |
| 回教..... | 07 | |
| 其他宗教..... | 08 | |
| 無宗教、無神派..... | 09 | |
| 我不確知..... | 10 | |

36 您母親的宗教是什麼？

| | | |
|-----------------|----|---------|
| 儒教..... | 01 | (51—52) |
| 道教..... | 02 | |
| 佛教..... | 03 | |
| 以上二教或三教的混合..... | 04 | |
| 天主教..... | 05 | |
| 基督教..... | 06 | |
| 回教..... | 07 | |
| 其他宗教..... | 08 | |
| 無宗教、無神派..... | 09 | |
| 我不確知..... | 10 | |

37 您是否為某教會、廟宗或其他宗教組織的一員？

| | | |
|--------|---|------|
| 是..... | 1 | (53) |
| 否..... | 2 | |

如答案為是的話

| | | |
|-----------------|---|------|
| 儒教..... | 1 | (54) |
| 道教..... | 2 | |
| 佛教..... | 3 | |
| 以上二教或三教的混合..... | 4 | |
| 天主教..... | 5 | |
| 基督教..... | 6 | |
| 回教..... | 7 | |
| 其他宗教..... | 8 | |

38 您認為宗教對於您如何重要？

| | | |
|-------------|---|------|
| 非常重要..... | 1 | (55) |
| 相當重要..... | 2 | |
| 不很重要..... | 3 | |
| 一點都不重要..... | 4 | |

多謝。

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

TABLE A.C Responses to the Statements Concerning Meaning,
Suffering, Injustice, Religion, and Politics
(in percent)

| Item | | Nationality ^a | | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA | |
| I. Meaning | | | | | | | |
| 1. I often wonder what life is all about. | 1 ^b | 48.2 | 37.3 | 57.8 | 53.0 | 55.7 | |
| | 2 | 40.9 | 50.0 | 27.9 | 27.3 | 30.2 | |
| | 3 | ---- | 1.4 | 4.5 | 1.6 | 2.2 | |
| | 4 | 8.0 | 9.2 | 5.2 | 7.6 | 7.6 | |
| | 5 | 2.9 | 2.1 | 4.5 | 10.5 | 4.3 | |
| | M | 1.76 | 1.89 | 1.71 | 1.95 | 1.74 | |
| | Md | 1.55 | 1.75 | 1.37 | 1.44 | 1.40 | |
| | SD | 1.01 | 0.97 | 1.08 | 1.34 | 1.10 | |
| | N | 137 | 142 | 154 | 304 | 1005 | |
| | NR | 1 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0 | |
| | 2. I am not very interested in discussion of the question of the meaning or meaninglessness of life. | 1 | 9.4 | 5.6 | 9.7 | 5.5 | 10.3 |
| | | 2 | 22.5 | 13.9 | 13.0 | 4.5 | 18.7 |
| 3 | | 0.7 | 2.8 | 5.2 | 1.0 | 2.7 | |
| 4 | | 28.3 | 31.3 | 14.9 | 12.0 | 20.3 | |
| 5 | | 39.1 | 46.5 | 57.1 | 77.0 | 48.0 | |
| M | | 3.65 | 4.10 | 3.97 | 4.51 | 3.77 | |
| Md | | 4.11 | 4.39 | 4.63 | 4.85 | 4.40 | |
| SD | | 1.43 | 1.25 | 1.46 | 1.10 | 1.46 | |
| N | | 138 | 144 | 154 | 309 | 1000 | |
| NR | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | |
| 3. Despite the often chaotic conditions of human life, I believe there is an order and pattern to existence that someday we will come to understand. | | 1 | 8.7 | 24.5 | 37.7 | 33.4 | 57.8 |
| | | 2 | 26.8 | 40.6 | 25.3 | 33.4 | 25.2 |
| | 3 | 18.8 | 9.1 | 11.0 | 13.6 | 2.3 | |
| | 4 | 24.6 | 15.4 | 7.8 | 8.1 | 8.7 | |
| | 5 | 21.0 | 10.5 | 18.2 | 11.4 | 6.0 | |
| | M | 3.23 | 2.47 | 2.44 | 2.31 | 1.80 | |
| | Md | 3.27 | 2.13 | 1.99 | 2.00 | 1.37 | |
| | SD | 1.29 | 1.30 | 1.50 | 1.32 | 1.20 | |
| | N | 138 | 143 | 154 | 308 | 1003 | |
| | NR | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | |

TABLE A.C (cont.)

| Item | | Nationality | | | | |
|---|----|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| 4. Although mankind understands the world around him better, the basic meaning of life is beyond our understanding. | 1 | 9.4 | 31.9 | 68.6 | 23.6 | 37.6 |
| | 2 | 34.8 | 41.7 | 22.2 | 22.3 | 33.3 |
| | 3 | 6.5 | 2.8 | 3.3 | 5.9 | 0.8 |
| | 4 | 36.2 | 18.8 | 2.6 | 22.6 | 18.8 |
| | 5 | 13.0 | 4.9 | 3.3 | 25.6 | 9.5 |
| | M | 3.09 | 2.23 | 1.50 | 3.04 | 2.29 |
| | Md | 3.39 | 1.93 | 1.23 | 3.19 | 1.87 |
| | SD | 1.27 | 1.22 | 0.93 | 1.56 | 1.38 |
| | N | 138 | 144 | 153 | 305 | 1002 |
| | NR | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| II. Suffering | | | | | | |
| 5. In recent generations, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of human suffering. | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 8.5 | 4.9 | 6.3 |
| | 2 | 2.9 | 6.3 | 25.5 | 23.1 | 21.4 |
| | 3 | 5.9 | 3.5 | 2.6 | 4.5 | 3.5 |
| | 4 | 24.8 | 22.4 | 17.0 | 19.2 | 27.2 |
| | 5 | 65.7 | 67.1 | 46.4 | 48.4 | 41.6 |
| | M | 4.52 | 4.49 | 3.67 | 3.83 | 3.77 |
| | Md | 4.75 | 4.76 | 4.29 | 4.42 | 4.19 |
| | SD | 0.80 | 0.89 | 1.48 | 1.37 | 1.35 |
| | N | 137 | 143 | 153 | 308 | 1002 |
| | NR | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. In recent generations, suffering has increased in the world. | 1 | 14.5 | 39.9 | 44.4 | 14.1 | 17.9 |
| | 2 | 33.3 | 39.9 | 32.7 | 26.3 | 30.5 |
| | 3 | 29.7 | 6.3 | 4.6 | 22.7 | 12.3 |
| | 4 | 17.4 | 11.2 | 15.0 | 24.3 | 30.4 |
| | 5 | 5.1 | 2.8 | 3.3 | 12.5 | 9.0 |
| | M | 2.65 | 1.97 | 2.00 | 2.95 | 2.82 |
| | Md | 2.57 | 1.75 | 1.67 | 2.92 | 2.63 |
| | SD | 1.09 | 1.08 | 1.18 | 1.26 | 1.29 |
| | N | 138 | 143 | 153 | 304 | 1004 |
| | NR | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 1 |

TABLE A.C (cont.)

| Item | | Nationality | | | | |
|--|----|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| 7. The types of human suffering may have changed, and may continue to change, but mankind is not likely to reduce the extent of suffering. | 1 | 44.2 | 50.7 | 37.9 | 14.7 | 33.9 |
| | 2 | 33.5 | 36.7 | 34.0 | 31.9 | 28.2 |
| | 3 | 6.5 | 1.4 | 5.9 | 7.5 | 2.4 |
| | 4 | 10.9 | 7.0 | 15.7 | 29.3 | 22.3 |
| | 5 | 2.9 | 4.2 | 6.5 | 16.6 | 13.2 |
| | M | 1.93 | 1.78 | 2.19 | 3.01 | 2.53 |
| | Md | 1.66 | 1.49 | 1.86 | 2.96 | 2.07 |
| | SD | 1.10 | 1.07 | 1.28 | 1.37 | 1.47 |
| | N | 138 | 142 | 153 | 307 | 1002 |
| | NR | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| | | | | | | |
| 8. It is a mistake to believe that the reduction of suffering on earth is the critically important question for mankind. | 1 | 7.2 | 16.1 | 11.1 | 11.4 | 6.3 |
| | 2 | 18.1 | 23.8 | 13.1 | 20.8 | 12.3 |
| | 3 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 7.8 | ---- | 3.9 |
| | 4 | 38.4 | 26.6 | 11.8 | 22.8 | 19.7 |
| | 5 | 34.1 | 31.5 | 56.2 | 45.0 | 57.9 |
| | M | 3.74 | 3.34 | 3.90 | 3.69 | 4.11 |
| | Md | 4.08 | 3.80 | 4.61 | 4.28 | 4.64 |
| | SD | 1.30 | 1.52 | 1.47 | 1.49 | 1.29 |
| | N | 138 | 143 | 153 | 307 | 1002 |
| | NR | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| | | | | | | |
| III. Injustice | | | | | | |
| 9. In recent generations, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of injustice in human life. | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 4.6 | 2.9 | 11.0 |
| | 2 | 2.9 | 3.5 | 13.7 | 21.1 | 29.5 |
| | 3 | 25.7 | 5.6 | 5.9 | 17.2 | 5.8 |
| | 4 | 32.4 | 32.9 | 22.2 | 30.5 | 31.1 |
| | 5 | 38.2 | 57.3 | 53.6 | 28.2 | 22.7 |
| | M | 4.04 | 4.43 | 4.07 | 3.60 | 3.62 |
| | Md | 4.14 | 4.63 | 4.57 | 3.79 | 3.62 |
| | SD | 0.91 | 0.81 | 1.25 | 1.19 | 1.37 |
| | N | 136 | 143 | 153 | 308 | 1003 |
| | NR | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| | | | | | | |

TABLE A.C (cont.)

| Item | | Nationality | | | | |
|---|----|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| 10. In recent generations, injustice has increased in human life. | 1 | 10.1 | 46.2 | 55.8 | 8.1 | 18.3 |
| | 2 | 31.2 | 32.9 | 27.9 | 21.4 | 28.9 |
| | 3 | 31.2 | 7.7 | 1.9 | 25.6 | 8.5 |
| | 4 | 20.3 | 12.6 | 8.4 | 28.2 | 30.3 |
| | 5 | 7.2 | 0.7 | 5.8 | 16.6 | 14.0 |
| | M | 2.83 | 1.89 | 1.81 | 3.24 | 2.93 |
| | Md | 2.78 | 1.62 | 1.40 | 3.30 | 2.84 |
| | SD | 1.09 | 1.05 | 1.19 | 1.20 | 1.37 |
| | N | 138 | 143 | 154 | 308 | 999 |
| | NR | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| 11. The types of injustice may have changed, and may continue to change, but mankind is not likely to reduce the extent of injustice. | 1 | 40.1 | 44.4 | 62.3 | 25.9 | 42.0 |
| | 2 | 35.8 | 38.2 | 28.6 | 32.0 | 29.0 |
| | 3 | 11.7 | 2.1 | 3.2 | 6.1 | 2.9 |
| | 4 | 8.8 | 12.5 | 4.5 | 26.5 | 17.9 |
| | 5 | 3.6 | 2.8 | 1.3 | 9.4 | 8.1 |
| | M | 2.00 | 1.91 | 1.54 | 2.62 | 2.21 |
| | Md | 1.78 | 1.65 | 1.30 | 2.25 | 1.77 |
| | SD | 1.10 | 1.10 | 0.80 | 1.36 | 1.36 |
| | N | 137 | 144 | 154 | 309 | 998 |
| | NR | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| 12. It is a mistake to believe that the reduction of injustice on earth is the critically important question for mankind. | 1 | 3.6 | 15.5 | 11.8 | 9.5 | 6.4 |
| | 2 | 11.9 | 33.8 | 18.3 | 24.1 | 15.0 |
| | 3 | 5.8 | 1.4 | 9.2 | 2.7 | 2.9 |
| | 4 | 35.8 | 33.8 | 13.1 | 28.8 | 24.3 |
| | 5 | 40.9 | 15.5 | 47.7 | 35.1 | 51.4 |
| | M | 3.94 | 3.00 | 3.67 | 3.56 | 3.99 |
| | Md | 4.25 | 3.00 | 4.33 | 3.98 | 4.53 |
| | SD | 1.18 | 1.39 | 1.50 | 1.41 | 1.31 |
| | N | 137 | 142 | 153 | 299 | 1003 |
| | NR | 1 | 4 | 1 | 11 | 2 |

TABLE A.C (cont.)

| Item | | Nationality | | | | |
|---|----|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| IV. Religion | | | | | | |
| 13. Mankind's most difficult and destructive experiences are often the source of increased understanding and powers of endurance. | 1 | 36.8 | 55.6 | 16.9 | 26.4 | 40.2 |
| | 2 | 52.2 | 36.1 | 50.0 | 49.2 | 44.3 |
| | 3 | 5.9 | 0.7 | 7.1 | 4.0 | 2.8 |
| | 4 | 4.4 | 4.9 | 13.0 | 13.5 | 9.2 |
| | 5 | 0.7 | 2.8 | 13.0 | 6.9 | 3.5 |
| | M | 1.80 | 1.63 | 2.55 | 2.25 | 1.92 |
| | Md | 1.75 | 1.40 | 2.16 | 1.98 | 1.72 |
| | SD | 0.80 | 0.94 | 1.28 | 1.19 | 1.05 |
| | N | 136 | 144 | 154 | 303 | 992 |
| | NR | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 13 |
| 14. Suffering, injustice, and finally death need not be negative experiences; their significance can be shaped by our beliefs. | 1 | 40.9 | 42.0 | 41.6 | 49.0 | 53.9 |
| | 2 | 50.4 | 36.4 | 39.6 | 29.9 | 31.7 |
| | 3 | 2.2 | 9.8 | 1.3 | 7.1 | 4.2 |
| | 4 | 5.1 | 7.0 | 11.0 | 6.5 | 6.3 |
| | 5 | 1.5 | 4.9 | 6.5 | 7.5 | 3.9 |
| | M | 1.76 | 1.97 | 2.01 | 1.94 | 1.75 |
| | Md | 1.68 | 1.72 | 1.71 | 1.53 | 1.43 |
| | SD | 0.85 | 1.12 | 1.21 | 1.22 | 1.07 |
| | N | 137 | 143 | 154 | 308 | 1003 |
| | NR | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 15. In the long run, undeserving persons often seem to be the ones who win the most advantages. | 1 | 2.9 | 9.8 | 24.2 | 3.9 | 11.6 |
| | 2 | 18.2 | 35.7 | 37.3 | 28.9 | 47.5 |
| | 3 | 9.5 | 2.1 | 9.8 | 8.9 | 3.5 |
| | 4 | 32.1 | 23.1 | 16.3 | 32.9 | 22.2 |
| | 5 | 32.2 | 29.4 | 12.4 | 25.3 | 15.2 |
| | M | 3.83 | 3.27 | 2.56 | 3.48 | 2.82 |
| | Md | 4.10 | 3.61 | 2.19 | 3.75 | 2.31 |
| | SD | 1.21 | 1.45 | 1.35 | 1.26 | 1.32 |
| | N | 137 | 143 | 153 | 304 | 1001 |
| | NR | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 4 |

TABLE A.C (cont.)

| Item | | Nationality | | | | |
|--|----|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| 16. In face of the almost continuous conflict and violence in life, I cannot see how men are going to learn to live in mutual respect and peace with one another. | 1 | 12.3 | 16.7 | 12.3 | 17.5 | 16.5 |
| | 2 | 27.5 | 37.5 | 26.0 | 31.1 | 23.1 |
| | 3 | 6.5 | 5.6 | 7.1 | 3.2 | 2.7 |
| | 4 | 34.1 | 22.2 | 18.8 | 24.3 | 28.2 |
| | 5 | 19.6 | 18.1 | 35.7 | 23.9 | 29.5 |
| | M | 3.21 | 2.88 | 3.40 | 3.06 | 3.31 |
| | Md | 3.61 | 2.39 | 3.74 | 2.95 | 3.77 |
| | SD | 1.36 | 1.41 | 1.49 | 1.46 | 1.50 |
| | N | 138 | 144 | 154 | 309 | 1003 |
| | NR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | | |
| 17. Efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems by religious means seem to me to be a waste of time and resources. | 1 | 9.4 | 8.4 | 16.2 | 12.1 | 8.2 |
| | 2 | 18.8 | 21.0 | 23.4 | 20.9 | 20.8 |
| | 3 | 10.9 | 7.0 | 5.2 | 3.9 | 4.0 |
| | 4 | 41.3 | 45.5 | 30.5 | 34.3 | 41.7 |
| | 5 | 19.6 | 18.2 | 24.7 | 28.8 | 25.3 |
| | M | 3.43 | 3.44 | 3.24 | 3.47 | 3.55 |
| | Md | 3.76 | 3.80 | 3.67 | 3.88 | 3.91 |
| | SD | 1.26 | 1.24 | 1.46 | 1.41 | 1.29 |
| | N | 138 | 143 | 154 | 306 | 1003 |
| | NR | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| | | | | | | |
| 18. There are many aspects of the beliefs and practices of the world's religions with which I might not agree; nevertheless I consider them to be valuable efforts to deal with man's important questions. | 1 | 16.1 | 25.2 | 40.3 | 46.6 | 65.9 |
| | 2 | 33.6 | 44.1 | 46.1 | 33.1 | 26.0 |
| | 3 | 18.2 | 4.9 | 3.9 | 1.3 | 0.5 |
| | 4 | 24.8 | 15.4 | 5.8 | 9.2 | 4.7 |
| | 5 | 7.3 | 10.5 | 3.9 | 9.8 | 2.9 |
| | M | 2.75 | 2.42 | 1.87 | 2.02 | 1.53 |
| | Md | 2.52 | 2.06 | 1.71 | 1.60 | 1.26 |
| | SD | 1.20 | 1.30 | 1.01 | 1.32 | 0.95 |
| | N | 137 | 143 | 154 | 305 | 1003 |
| | NR | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 2 |
| | | | | | | |

TABLE A.C (cont.)

| Item | | Nationality | | | | |
|---|----|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | JPN | KRA | TLD | NZ&A | CNA |
| V. Politics | | | | | | |
| 19. Efforts to deal with man's most difficult problems by political means seem to me to be a waste of time and resources. | 1 | 9.5 | 32.9 | 21.7 | 9.1 | 17.5 |
| | 2 | 29.9 | 29.4 | 26.3 | 30.9 | 26.8 |
| | 3 | 6.6 | 5.6 | 7.2 | 1.6 | 4.2 |
| | 4 | 41.6 | 21.7 | 20.4 | 32.2 | 34.7 |
| | 5 | 12.5 | 10.5 | 24.3 | 26.1 | 16.7 |
| | M | 3.18 | 2.48 | 2.99 | 2.36 | 3.06 |
| | Md | 3.06 | 2.08 | 2.77 | 3.76 | 3.54 |
| | SD | 1.25 | 1.41 | 1.51 | 1.39 | 1.41 |
| | N | 137 | 143 | 152 | 307 | 1003 |
| | NR | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 20. In the long run, mankind will be able to reduce injustice and suffering by wise political action. | 1 | 6.6 | 7.7 | 8.4 | 6.9 | 20.4 |
| | 2 | 39.7 | 36.6 | 28.6 | 35.6 | 36.7 |
| | 3 | 11.0 | 3.5 | 13.0 | 10.2 | 5.5 |
| | 4 | 26.5 | 26.8 | 13.0 | 27.4 | 18.1 |
| | 5 | 16.2 | 25.4 | 37.0 | 19.8 | 19.1 |
| | M | 3.06 | 3.25 | 3.42 | 3.18 | 2.79 |
| | Md | 2.83 | 3.58 | 3.50 | 3.23 | 2.30 |
| | SD | 1.26 | 1.38 | 1.44 | 1.29 | 1.45 |
| | N | 136 | 142 | 154 | 303 | 1003 |
| | NR | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 2 |

^aJPN = Japanese; KRA = Korean; TLD = Thai; NZ&A = New Zealander and Australian; CNA = Chinese.

^b1 = Fully agree; 2 = Partly agree; 3 = Uncertain; 4 = Partly disagree; 5 = Fully disagree; M = Mean; Md = Median; SD = Standard deviation; N = Number of cases on which the statistics are calculated. NR = No response.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Peter Chao has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Robert J. McNamara, Director
Professor, Sociology, Loyola

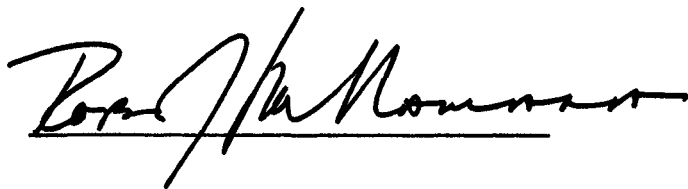
Dr. Ross P. Scherer
Associate Professor, Sociology, Loyola

Dr. Kenneth M. Johnson
Assistant Professor, Sociology, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April 22, 1982



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Robert J. McNamara', is written over a horizontal line.
